DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 375 918 JC 940 638

AUTHOR Roueche, Suanne D., Ed.
TITLE Innovation Abstracts, Volume XVI, 1994.
INSTITUTION Texas Univ., Austin. National Inst. for Staff and Organizational Development.
SPONS AGENCY Kellogg Foundation, Battle Creek, Mich.; Richardson (Sid W.) Foundation, Fort Worth, Tex.
REPORT NO ISSN-0199-106X
PUB DATE 94
NOTE 62p.
PUB TYPE Collected Works - Serials (022)
JOURNAL CIT Innovation Abstracts; v16 n1-30 Jan-Dec 1994

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Classroom Communication; *Classroom Techniques; *College Instruction; Community Colleges; Cooperative Learning; Cooperative Programs; *Faculty Development; Instructional Development; Instructional Improvement; *Instructional Innovation; *Learning Activities; Learning Strategies; Spanish; Speech Instruction; Teacher Effectiveness; Teacher Improvement; *Teaching Methods; Teaching Styles; Test Coaching; Two Year Colleges; Writing Instruction

ABSTRACT

This volume of 30 one- to two-page abstracts highlights a variety of innovative approaches to teaching and learning in the community college. Topics covered in the abstracts include: (1) music in the biology classroom; (2) pairing English as a second language and freshman composition students in writing activities; (3) moot court exercises in public law classes; (4) applying current events to economics classes; (5) junior high school/college collaborative learning; (6) tailoring college curricula to fit customer needs; (7) helping students make the transition from the social to the learning mode; (8) cultural diversity for faculty and curriculum development; (9) the use of academic warmups in class; (10) teaching ethics across the curriculum; (11) employing structured conversations in conversational Spanish; (12) the use of editorials in writing classes to engage the campus community; (13) taking roll and learning names; (14) experiential learning; (15) a course examining criminals in literature; (16) interactive drama to teach community concerns; (17) the use of freewriting; (18) assessing instructional strategies; (19) talk-alouds for student assessment; (20) technology in teaching; (21) a group method for teaching public speaking; (22) survival Spanish for college staff; (23) teaching students how to achieve excellence; (24) creative writing in history classes; (25) recruiting women engineering students; (26) journal article dissection in biology; (27) innovative topics for speech classes; (28) encouraging students to build academic libraries; (29) a bilingual computer class; (30) portfolio creation; (31) benefits of group papers; (32) increasing student participation in business classes; (33) criminal law and fairy tales; and (34) teaching empathy in nursing classes. (KP)

ED 375 918

Innovation Abstracts

Volume XVI, Numbers 1-30

Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

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VOLUME XVI, NUMBER 1

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (NISOD), COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN • WITH SUPPORT FROM THE W. K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION AND THE SID W. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION

Biology + Music = Cultural Diversity

The curriculum of the natural sciences is difficult to infuse with "cultural diversity." Beyond covering a sampling of race- or culture-associated genetic diseases, the effort generally is limited to crediting those ethnically diverse researchers who have contributed to the discipline. I turned to the following strategy to bring some cultural diversity into my biology course.

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When our department upgraded the audiovisual equipment in a large lecture hall and my biology class was scheduled to meet there, I was determined to take advantage of the sound facilities. But how could I integrate the music I loved into biology? I considered the possibility of using background music for certain class presentations, but abandoned that idea and decided to play music as students arrived for class. What should I play? How will the music I select be received? Will they like it? Will they reject it and thereby reject a part of me? The experiment was not without risk!

It seemed best to start on neutral ground but not pander to popular tastes. I first played a contemporary album of acoustic jazz by Lionel Hampton and the Golden Men of Jazz. The sound level was important, not ear-splitting but with a clear presence. I wanted the students to be consciously aware that something unusual was happening; I also decided not to warn them of my new plan. I could hardly wait for their reaction.

Using the programmable CD player, I timed the music to end at the moment class was to begin. On the first day, I walked into class, the music stopped, and I said "good morning" and began the lecture. The students said nothing. They were indifferent. I was disappointed but not defeated.

Each class meeting thereafter I played different types of music, from blues to bluegrass, from Bach to Bartok. Still, there was no reaction. One day I decided to sacrifice my musical standards to force a response; I played music by U2. "Do you like that kind of music?" a young man asked. This meager beginning blossomed into continuing student dialogues. At the end of the term, one student (an avowed "heavy-metal rocker" who had never said a word) asked if I would play "some more of that guy that plays that vibraphone thing." He was referring to Lionel Hampton.

Before each class meeting I now write the name of the composer and/or musical group on the board and prominently display the album cover. One day I played a recording by Kronos String Quartet, *Pieces of Africa*, packaged in a strikingly beautiful African design. The following class meeting a student from Nigeria was wearing an African shirt of much the same design; previously he had worn only western clothing. A coincidence? Maybe, but it occurred to me that perhaps I had stumbled upon a way to bridge some cultural gaps. I asked students to bring music from their home countries—on the condition it not be Euro-American pop, new age, etc. That term we shared music from Iran, India, Zaire, and the Philippines.

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It is difficult to measure the impact of this project. Judging from conversations with students and comments from staff members who hear the music, it has multiple effects.

- It provides a topic of conversation for students who do not yet feel comfortable talking about biology.
- It lightens the classroom atmosphere.
- It recognizes and honors the diverse cultural backgrounds of all students.
- It provides exposure to diverse music styles.

This strategy has provided an opportunity for me to share a personal interest with my students. It seems that students find me more approachable; I have created opportunities for interaction. It has been a risk well worth taking.

Stephen Kellogg, *Professor, Biology*

For further information, contact the author at Chaffey Community College, 5885 Haven Avenue, Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91737.

Pairing ESL and College Writers

A pairing project at DeKalb College provides for structured writing opportunities in which students in ESL Advance Writing classes and Freshman Composition classes become writing partners. The goals of the project are to promote social interaction between the native-born and foreign-born students and to strengthen the writing skills of both groups.

The Pairing Project

Each quarter an ESL Advanced Writing class is paired with an English Freshman Composition section. Native-born and foreign-born students collaborate on joint assignments. ESL and English department instructors volunteer to participate if they teach at the same hours and elect to include joint writing activities in their syllabi.

Recommended Activities for the Pairing Project

- The teaching team pairs the students, and they write letters of introduction to each other.
- The team arranges a social gathering at which students meet their partners.
- Each student writes a narrative theme on a personal topic.
- **First collaboration:** The ESL teacher addresses the combined classes on the topic of special needs of ESL students. The students are then paired with new partners. The new pairs spend 30-45 minutes editing each other's narrative themes.
- **Second collaboration:** New partnerships are formed, and the new pairs gather biographical information. The students write biographies of their partners.
- **Third collaboration:** The two classes meet; partners read and edit each other's biographies.
- **Fourth collaboration:** New partnerships are formed. These new partners interview each other concerning some customs, educational practices, or religious folkways of their culture and use this information to write a comparison/contrast theme.
- **Fifth collaboration:** The partners edit each other's comparison/contrast themes.
- The two classes share an end-of-term "native dish" meal.

Conclusions

Student evaluations of the pairing project over four terms have been extremely favorable. As one Chinese student stated: "I liked the activities that gave me more time and chances to talk to my partner and understand him." An Indonesian student remarked: "Working with English 101 students really helped give me some ideas about their class, such as what kinds of essays they are writing and the details they use." An American student commented: "I had a wonderful opportunity to learn about a culture that I have not been able to experience firsthand. Involvement with foreign students helped open my eyes to other viewpoints." Students from both groups commented that they focused more carefully on editing, format, and composition development when they knew they had a peer audience.

One tangible result of the pairing project was identified by an ESL instructor: "When we match students, the percentages of ESL students passing the writing exit exam are higher than the norm. Increased contact with the English language and its speakers, especially in an editing relationship, has had a critical effect on ESL students' writing abilities."

Barbara Jean Hall, *Assistant Professor, ESL/English*

Harris Green, *Professor, English*

For further information, contact the authors at DeKalb College, 555 North Indian Creek Drive, Clarkston, GA 30021.

Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

January 21, 1994, Vol. XVI, No. 1
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INNOVATION ABSTRACTS is a publication of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD), Department of Educational Administration, College of Education, EDB 348, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, (512) 471-7545. Funding in part by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Sid W. Richardson Foundation. Issued weekly when classes are in session during fall and spring terms. ISSN 0199-106X.

VOLUME XVI, NUMBER 2

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (NISOD), COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN • WITH SUPPORT FROM THE W. K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION AND THE SID W. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION

Moot Court Exercise

Law, Politics, and the Judicial Process is a course introducing students to public law, the Canadian Constitution (particularly the Charter of Rights), and the judicial process. As students experience the interaction of politics and process, they also confront the nagging reality that there is often no "right" answer to complex legal and constitutional problems.

When a representative of a local debate organization, the Sir Winston Churchill Society, approached the president of the college about getting students involved in debate, I decided that my class should implement a pilot moot court exercise. The students were excited; and the Churchill Society representative, a senior partner in one of Canada's largest law firms, was willing to share his firm's expertise and resources.

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As a class we decided to create a fictional Supreme Supreme Court of Canada (SSCC) to sit atop the existing Supreme Court in the appeal hierarchy. This new court would hear an appeal from an actual decision—rendered by the Supreme Court—that upheld Canada's criminal prohibition of the sale of obscene materials. Also, the Court would hear interventions by counsel for several interest groups—e.g., civil liberties associations and women's organizations.

Our SSCC had nine members—seven students, one senior practicing lawyer, and a Justice of the Alberta Court of Queen's Bench. Students were counsel for the litigants and intervenors, and others acted as journalists and academic commentators. The students recognized the important role played by the media and academe in the judicial and constitutional processes.

Members of the law firm briefed students on decorum and the finer points of the law. They collected materials for the students' use, allowed students to use the firm's law library, and arranged for the use of a real courtroom on the day of the hearing. Other faculty in my department helped students with their research.

The two and a half hour moot court exercise included serious argument, attentive listening, questioning, and solemn deliberation. In the end, a bare majority of justices of the SSCC voted to reverse the unanimous decision of the Supreme Court! Within a week I received the written reasons of the SSCC justices.

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Afterward, student comments contained constructive criticisms of the exercise and valuable insights into the judicial process they would not have gleaned from reading textbooks. Students said they needed more time to prepare and practice oral argument within the constraints of Supreme Supreme Court decorum. Some students confessed that they truly struggled with their positions on the case and were sensitive to the influence others may have had on them in the days leading to the hearing. All said they had developed a fuller appreciation of the law and the judicial process.

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Instructors planning a similar exercise should consider the following suggestions:

1. Enlist the support of members of the legal community. Students are keen to work with practitioners in the real world of law.
2. Choose a case that interests students.
3. Prepare the students for the experiences as well as the intellectual issues. Students must grapple with the technicalities of judicial review and perform in an intimidating environment before their peers and senior members of the community.
4. Communicate to students that this exercise is a brief introduction to the real legal world. Students rise to the occasion because they have several reasons to do well, not just a grade.
5. Be flexible. A good relationship with one's students and good humor can accomplish much.

Tom Bateman, *Instructor, Political Science*

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Community College Leadership Program, Department of Educational Administration
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Children in the College Environment

Community colleges have become increasingly diverse. They have had to shift gears to better serve the growing numbers of nontraditional students.

One of Hazard Community College's most unique programs, established to offer a special service to all of its students, is After-School Tutoring. Beginning on a small scale five years ago, this program now offers three sessions per year, orchestrated by a coordinator, instructional specialists, and a host of tutors. The program, housed in the Learning Center, is designed to offer the facility, equipment, materials, and learning specialists to the community.

About six weeks before the after-school program is to begin, information is sent to local media (television, newspapers, and radio). Public school principals, counselors, and teachers are notified directly.

Parents (and sometimes the children themselves) make arrangements for attendance, either on Mondays and Wednesdays, or Tuesdays and Thursdays. Two time slots are available, each one and a half hours in length. Children may enroll in two programs of study.

The fall session begins in October, when report cards for the first nine weeks of public school are distributed—the distribution of report cards usually brings an influx of students. The spring session begins shortly after Christmas break. The first afternoon in the Learning Center, students are assessed in the areas they choose to study. Individualized plans of instruction are designed, based on students' assessment scores.

The Learning Center has a variety of materials available as learning aids. Books, workbooks, and worksheets are the more traditional materials, but computers are becoming the most popular teaching tools. An instructional specialist writes the lessons; tutors grade assignments and report each child's progress to the specialist.

The six-week summer tutoring program is in session during the college's summer school. Students are divided into groups by grade levels (1-4, 5-8, and 9-12), and a different coordinator works with each age group. Unlike the spring and fall sessions, the summer session meets Monday through Thursday for one and a half hours.

A more relaxed summer atmosphere lends itself to more creative learning experiences. Outdoor games and pizza parties are used for breaks from learning activities and are excellent strategies for promoting friendships and a sense of community among the children and staff members.

The children want to participate in the tutoring program because it requires that they come to the college. Fortunately, many HCC students are willing to tutor on-site. The college staff enthusiastically supports the Learning Center's opening the doors of the college to the young people of the community.

Lisa Helf, *Coordinator, Learning Center*

For further information, contact the author at Hazard Community College, Highway 15 South, One Community College Drive, Hazard, KY 41701-2402.

Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

January 28, 1994, Vol. XVI, No. 2
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INNOVATION ABSTRACTS is a publication of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD), Department of Educational Administration, College of Education, EDB 348, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, (512) 471-7545. Funding in part by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Sid W. Richardson Foundation. Issued weekly when classes are in session during fall and spring terms. ISSN 0199-106X.

VOLUME XVI, NUMBER 3

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (NISOD), COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN • WITH SUPPORT FROM THE W. K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION AND THE SID W. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION

Teaching as an Inspirational Activity

An activity is inspirational if it helps me connect with people and the world around me. An activity is inspirational if it brings me in touch with the deepest parts of myself. In these ways, teaching is an inspirational act. Teaching enriches my life by "opening my eyes" to people and myself. Some of my teaching practices reflect this inspirational quality of teaching.

1. **Before each class I remind myself that I am going to spend an hour and 15 minutes with 25 people—people who have the same needs I do for recognition, challenge, and employment.** Each and every time I walk into the classroom, I feel I have the opportunity to support students in developing their self-confidence and in discovering new avenues of educational opportunity. Also, with each class I face the challenge of encouraging students to grapple with new and sometimes uncomfortable experiences. By reminding myself of these "personal" aspects of teaching, I encourage myself to enter the classroom in an open, available state. When I am open, I can better see and thus can better help students realize their strengths and capabilities. By thinking of the people I will be spending time with in class, I become enthusiastic about the opportunity of sharing in the joy of their learning.
2. **I honor my subject matter as a source for continuing personal growth.** The fact that my field is alive and constantly evolving requires that I change and grow with it. I need to maintain a living relationship with my subject matter, and the quality of our union is continually communicated in the classroom. For example, anytime I have even the slightest lack of clarity regarding a particular point in class, my students immediately sense it and either barrage me with questions or simply "don't get it." Any break in my relationship with the material automatically translates into discomfort and confusion for my students. I need to stay abreast of the latest developments in my field to ensure that my students leave the classroom current and with an awareness of how *they* will need to change with the subject matter. I try to involve my students in the current controversies in the field so that they become empowered to influence their future.
3. **To the best of my ability, I offer the subject matter to my students as a gift.** Some of my worst experiences as a student occurred when the instructor imposed the course content on the class. My tendency was either to reject completely the material or, just as bad, if the instructor was charismatic, totally adopt his or her perspective. As a teacher, by presenting my subject matter as a gift, I develop a level of detachment because I know I cannot make someone like or even want a gift. Once the subject matter is offered, I need to release it to my students and provide them the total opportunity to work with it in their own ways. The more effectively I release course material to my students, the more they will relate to the information as their own. Sharing subject matter as a gift confers upon my students the right and the responsibility to apply it as they see fit.
4. **I recognize that I am interdependently involved with other teachers in educating students.** The experiences students have in my classes contribute to or detract from their *total* education. My objective then is not only to help students master my course material but also help them develop their ability to work with any type of information. I try to emphasize to my students that my course is not the most important course they will ever take, but rather that all courses they take are important. I dedicate course time to helping students develop the study, writing, and verbal skills necessary for succeeding in *all* areas. When students ask me why I handle my class differently than another instructor, I emphasize that there are many effective approaches rather than portray mine as the best. I encourage students to develop their ability to learn from and enjoy a variety of teaching styles because in the same sense they will need to work with a multitude of people and situations on the job. Just as important, this respect and appreciation for other subjects and teachers must be the foundation for *my* relationships with my peers. I need to effectively work with, ask for help from, and provide support to the instructors and schools with which I work.
5. **I see my own sense of integrity as my most valuable resource.** At the absolute core, I feel the foundation for my effectiveness from semester to semester comes from how I feel about myself as a teacher. At what point, when I am making sure an exam is clearly written, do I begin to make the exam too easy? Am I assigning too

much or too little homework? What level of mastery of the material will be necessary for a student to earn an "A" for a course? From my perspective, the answer to these questions ultimately comes down to "How do I teach this course so that in my heart I will feel good about it?" To me, losing touch with this question is losing touch with my responsibility to my students. What truly maintains and nourishes me is knowing that I am asking students to realize their true potential and that I am doing everything I can to help them succeed.

Lee Cartwright, *Instructor, Business and Occupations*

For further information, contact the author at Santa Fe Community College, P.O. Box 4187, Santa Fe, NM 87502.

Practicing With the News

Students of economics find that applying course content to real world experiences makes learning fun and easy. One practical application strategy is having students monitor the U.S. economy in order to predict national economic trends. Students collect economic news and associate the news with the principles being discussed in class.

At the beginning of the quarter, I announce we are all responsible for collecting daily news concerning the health of the national economy. At first, students have few ideas about what to collect. As the term progresses and economic principles are introduced, the quality of the selected news articles improves. In the beginning, students record the news in a journal. Eventually, they are taught elementary computer skills, and as the course evolves they learn to use database software.

In economics, students learn how aggregate expenditures explain recession or expansion of the economy. They learn that expenditures are easier to understand when they are partially disaggregated into four expenditure groups—consumption, investment, government purchases, and net exports. Each expenditure group may be predicted by "spending determinants"—such items as disposable personal income, interest rates, price levels, business expectations, taxes, and others. A single spending determinant may be useful in predicting more than one category.

A database is an excellent medium by which to observe the economic relationships between spending determinants and expenditure groups. In designing the database, students learn economic principles. The news gathered during the term is sorted by spending determinants and eventually categorized to monitor the four expenditure groups.

Students design a database that contains two tables of information. First, each potential spending determinant is cross-referenced to the four expenditure groups. Second, a table of economic news is collected. In the latter table, each news item is organized by row (i.e., record), and each row includes unique identifiers (i.e., fields) describing the news item. In a row, a single news item in brief, is listed with its source and date. More important, the row contains a spending determinant identifier and a brief explanation of why the particular news item fits the chosen spending determinant.

The second table of the database allows students to systematically collect economic news and decide how the news fits a particular spending determinant studied in class. This is where the integration of knowledge and skills begins. The task is accomplished by combining both economic principles and computer skills. Students gain an appreciation for the crossdisciplinary nature of working in economics.

At this point, the full power of the database has yet to be exploited. Economic news may affect more than one expenditure group, but by design the structure of the database recognizes these complex relationships. The practical application is to extract meaningful economic information related to each expenditure group. For example, students query the database and print a report displaying all economic news related to consumption. This news might be sorted by spending determinant and date, then used to help forecast short-term consumption as it affects the entire economy.

By collecting the news and organizing it into logical constructs, the class is able to use information more efficiently. Computer skills are enhanced, and the students gain an appreciation for the practical use of economics and enjoy a fun project.

Thomas Cook, *Instructor, Economics*

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Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

February 4, 1994, Vol. XVI, No. 3
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INNOVATION ABSTRACTS is a publication of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD), Department of Educational Administration, College of Education, EDB 348, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, (512) 471-7545. Funding in part by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Sid W. Richardson Foundation. Issued weekly when classes are in session during fall and spring terms. ISSN 0199-106X.

VOLUME XVI, NUMBER 4

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (NISOD), COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN • WITH SUPPORT FROM THE W. K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION AND THE SID W. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION

Junior High School/College Collaborative Learning

Students in my local flora course must have a basic knowledge of flower structure before they can understand the descriptions of flowering plant families. These descriptions are based largely on the morphology—form and structure—of flowers. The arrangement of flower parts varies from one family to another, and the terminology used to describe this variation is highly technical.

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In the past I taught flower structure and terminology by lecturing on definitions and providing students with a glossary of the most common terms. Over the years, I accumulated a number of visuals to illustrate the terminology. In time, dissatisfied with the results of this approach, I began to use the lecture time for other introductory material and plunged into the basic subject matter and activities of the course. Unfortunately, neither approach seemed adequate to make students very conversant with flower morphology.

❦

Searching for a better way to teach flower morphology, I sought the assistance of a junior high school general science teacher. We arranged to have my flora students teach flower structure to two of his general science classes. The junior high school was just a few blocks from the college campus, and my laboratory period coincided with two of his classes.

My students were informed of the activity during the first week of class. I organized them into pairs and then into study groups of two pairs each. They were provided with copies of the material from the junior high school text and told that they would be teaching in pairs in approximately two weeks. Confronted with the task, my students requested that I use an optional period in their schedule to lecture on flower morphology. There was a high level of interest and lively discussion during this lecture.

My students took a test on flower morphology and submitted a lesson plan for approval before the teaching session at the junior high school. Seating charts for each of the junior high school classes and assignments of the flora partners were distributed before the activity.

Teaching sessions began with my students introducing themselves and then teaching the structure of flowers, using diagrams and fresh gladiolus. Pollination, fertilization, and subsequent seed development also were discussed.

❦

Test scores on flower structure for the junior high students averaged 5.2 percent higher than the average score on two previous chapter tests. Scores on the posttest for the college students averaged 20 points higher than the average score on the pretest. In addition to being pleased with their own improved test performances, the college students were eager to learn how the junior high students had performed on their posttests.

This activity served to forge an important bond among my students; they even continued to meet in their established study groups after the junior high school project. Discussion continues about other ways that we might collaborate to improve teaching and learning at both the college and junior high levels.

Gordon E. Hunter, *Professor, Biology*

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Writing to Improve Problem-Solving Skills

Writing in chemistry courses helps students develop problem-solving skills and reflect on material necessary for understanding and applying knowledge. I have discovered three particularly effective writing assignments—news articles, critical insights, and scientific reports.

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News articles are reports about magazine or newspaper articles which are relevant to material covered in lecture and laboratory. They are to be completed in a book report format. The destruction of the ozone layer and danger in food additives are representative of typical chemical news topics. Reports consist of short summaries of the articles and their conclusions.

Scientific reports require reading outside the textbook, directly applying the principles covered in lecture, and using three literature references.

Critical insights ("AH, HA!" experiences) are brief descriptions of understanding. Sometimes subjective, they are intended for the student's self-examination of his or her thinking/learning process. Critical insights in the introductory chemistry course include such topics as radioactive decay of elements and understanding the metals and nonmetals in the periodic table; in general chemistry, they include such subjects as the photoelectric effect, elemental analysis, and the thermodynamics of rubber stretching; in organic chemistry, they include insights on such subjects as the physical properties of organic compounds. One student commented on critical insights: "Working problems is like playing a sport. In order to be good at something, one has to practice. To master the game, one must be familiar with the basic concepts, put these concepts into play, and practice to become better."

❦

All assignments are awarded points to be used in determining students' final grades. Students tying the news article, scientific report, and critical insight to lecture earn bonus credits. Relating assignments to class discussion indicates that students are making the important connections between content covered in class and the "real world."

Howard C. Van Woert, Jr., *Instructor, Chemistry*

For further information, contact the author at Southeast Community College, University of Kentucky, Cumberland, KY 40823.

Announcing the sixteenth annual

International Conference on Teaching Excellence and Conference of Administrators

May 22-25, 1994 ★ Austin, Texas

The National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD)—based in the Department of Educational Administration, College of Education, The University of Texas at Austin—celebrates excellence in teaching and leadership through its annual conference, which attracts more than 1500 teachers and administrators each year. The event, co-sponsored by the League for Innovation in the Community College, will be held at the Hyatt Regency, Four Seasons, and Radisson Hotels.

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- ★ John E. Roueche, *Sid W. Richardson Regents Chair, Community College Leadership Program, The University of Texas at Austin*
- ★ Claire Weinstein, *Professor, Educational Psychology, College of Education, The University of Texas at Austin*
- ★ Wally Cox, *Professor, Computer Science and Country-Western Dancing, College of the Canyons, California*
  - ★ **Heel & Toe** *(little or no dance experience required)*: 9:00 a.m.-10:30 a.m. *OR* 1:30-3:00 p.m.
  - ★ **Texas Two-Step** *(some dance experience recommended)*: 11:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m. *OR* 3:30-5:30 p.m.

★ **For more information,** *contact Suanne Roueche, Director, NISOD, at 512/471-7545.*

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February 11, 1994, Vol. XVI, No. 4
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VOLUME XVI, NUMBER 5

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

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Tailoring a College Curriculum to Fit Customer Needs

Educators and administrators are becoming increasingly familiar with the principles of Deming, Juran, Crosby, Ishikawa, and other proponents of quality in manufacturing and customer service. In the past year, a large number of the major national educational associations have sponsored professional conferences that focus on applications of TQM in higher education. One of the common complaints voiced by educators about applying Deming principles and total quality management concepts to the educational arena stems from confusion in answering a fundamental question: Who are the *customers* we serve?

Educators frequently think of students as the only consumers of college degree programs. After all, they do appear to be the customers we recruit, counsel, and enroll in courses; to whom we sell books and materials, and provide services; whom we test, teach, and graduate. When it comes to educational statistics, the figures most frequently cited by educators to demonstrate effectiveness are derived by counting and cataloging the numbers of students—markets tapped; specific populations served; enrollments by college, unit, site, major, course, or instructor; retentions; drops; transfers; graduates; alumni; and activity participants. When we ask for ratings of our educational products and college services, we most often ask our own students.

Yet students are not simply consumers; they are also the products of the higher educational process. And unlike automotive parts or other fabricated products which can be closely monitored by quality control devices, students are self-directed individuals who contribute as much to their own development as the educators who may seek to "mold their minds." No wonder we have difficulty addressing the issue of quality in education—we may be able to establish some academic standards and to set cut-score tolerances, but we still cannot control all variables in the complex teaching and learning process.

When we, a team of Elizabethtown Community College educators, set out to design a new associate degree curriculum in quality technology, we opted for a different definition of the primary customers for our educational program. We envisioned our technical program customers as the businesses, industries, and service organizations for whom we would be supplying new or retrained employees as well as the universities to whom we would be sending transfer students. Our focus centered not so much on satisfying student wants as on fulfilling or surpassing the needs of those employers and universities that expressed interest in accepting our graduates.

Our curriculum development timetable took a year or two longer than it might have taken otherwise because of our initial decision to involve so many others in the research and development phases. A few traditional academics were skeptical of our methods. The inherited academic model for curriculum development implies that college faculty are the experts who should design an educational curriculum and faculty are the peer judges who sit on the curriculum review committees that finally approve any new college degree program. We did indeed involve faculty from a variety of disciplines, but we also chose to give a much stronger voice to our program advisory committee members and to external members of the community.

A key component of our process involved a competency skills assessment that our curriculum design team and program advisory members conducted to gather input from local businesses, industries, community organizations, and other educational institutions. The research questionnaire asked respondents to rank the importance of more than 50 possible competencies for program graduates in six general categories: communication skills, math and computational skills, personal computer skills, business principles and practices, quality process technical skills, and leadership skills. Results of this survey were critical to the curriculum design process and enabled curriculum planners to decide, for example, what level of mathematics to require in the program, which quality technology subject areas to emphasize in the curriculum, and what general education components to include in such support areas as communications, technical writing, problem-solving, and team leadership skills.

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Once the curriculum design team knew exactly which competencies were most expected of program graduates, it was relatively easy to sort the skills into specific academic courses and to develop a first draft of a proposed curriculum for an associate degree in quality technology. The proposed model was then sent out for review by local employers and faculty at other educational institutions. A program evaluation form was used to collect comments and suggestions for improving the curriculum. At this point the curriculum development process took another twist. Faculty from other community colleges expressed so much interest in the new degree program that the curriculum design team was expanded to include representatives from five other geographical areas in the state—Louisville, Lexington, Madisonville, Hopkinsville, and Owensboro.

While the expansion of the program planning team again slowed the curriculum process, it clearly led to a stronger program that better fits employment needs of the entire state. Seeking to satisfy a variety of specific local customer needs prompted the redesign team to create a curriculum with much more flexibility than similar degree programs. The final program has a core of six required quality science courses, with five additional program-approved technical courses chosen from a lengthy list of options that can be clustered into custom tracks to serve specific local workforce needs. This custom-tracking feature allows community colleges to quickly tailor the program and to offer concentrations in such areas as manufacturing, inventory management, customer service, health care, or environmental science. Because it takes so much time to get a new degree program approved and in place, this program customization feature offers colleges a means for responding quickly to changing workforce development needs.

The curriculum for the new degree program was approved by the Community College Senate and by the University of Kentucky Board of Trustees. The final phase of the process took place when the approved new degree program was again sent out to local area employers. This time the questions on the program needs assessment survey form asked employers to identify available positions and starting salaries for graduates, to suggest best times for offering classes, to volunteer to host co-op students, and to request representation on the program advisory committee. Employer evaluations indicated strong local support, with all respondents indicating either a "very strong" or "strong" need for the new associate degree program. Local support and involvement were key factors in securing approval to offer the new program from the Council on Higher Education. Because they have been involved from the outset, local employers indicate they actively will promote the new program and plan to recommend specific courses for upgrading the skills of current employees.

In all, the process of designing a curriculum to satisfy customer and workforce needs throughout the Commonwealth took just under three years. The customer research and redesign steps were clearly worth the extra time required to ensure a quality curriculum.

Darby Williams, *Dean of Academic Affairs*

For further information, contact the author at Firelands College of Bowling Green State University, 901 Rye Beach Road, Huron, OH 44839.

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Closing Session
10:15-11:30
- Tom Curley, *President and Publisher, USA Today*

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Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

February 18, 1994, Vol. XVI, No. 5
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VOLUME XVI, NUMBER 6

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (NISOD), COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN • WITH SUPPORT FROM THE W. K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION AND THE SID W. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION

Making the Transition from the Social to the Learning Mode

Many students need some class time to make the transition from the social to the learning mode (e.g., thinking about the discipline and learning rather than thinking about eating, parties, and other aspects of their social lives). I have developed some useful transition strategies in my anthropology courses; they easily could be implemented in other disciplines.

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For current events, I read newspaper articles to the class. Ideally, articles should have direct relevance to course material; but when such articles are scarce, it is possible to use current events by asking, for example, how an anthropologist would view a specific event or phenomenon, why anthropologists would be interested in the event, and how they would study it. As well as reinforcing course material, a discussion of current events has the added benefit of making the discipline relevant to the everyday life of the students. Well-respected print media and supermarket tabloids may be utilized. Besides providing comic relief, articles from tabloids may provide a useful starting point for discussions on course material. In an introductory course on physical anthropology, for example, tabloid articles are offered as proof that Bigfoot exists; these articles lead to class discussions of primate evolution, primate behavior, and the issue of proof.

Showing vignettes from discipline-related popular movies and television programs is a useful method. I typically show a video for several minutes before class is scheduled to begin. For an introductory course in physical anthropology, I generally play vignettes from the movies *Quest for Fire* and *Clan of the Cave Bear*; for an introductory course in archaeology, I play vignettes from *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. Watching a vignette from a discipline-related movie gets the students in the mood for learning more about the discipline. When I turn off the videos, it is a clear signal that class is to begin. The vignettes also may be used to reinforce concepts covered in class or for critical evaluation—e.g., given what we have learned in class, how accurate is the portrayal?

Sometimes I play classical or discipline-related music during the transitional period—e.g., in an introductory archaeology course, I play music recorded on instruments from past ages. When showing slides of African archaeological sites and contemporary people, I play "Scatterlings of Africa," a song by Johnny Clegg about the origins and plight of Africans. When I need to generate some enthusiasm, I play the theme to *Raiders of the Lost Ark*; and when I am in desperate need of comic relief, I play a recording of "King Tut" performed by Steve Martin during a skit on *Saturday Night Live*.

When I use trivia, I generally focus on the ties famous people have to the discipline and movies which have anthropologists as characters. Students seem particularly impressed, for example, with the knowledge that Agatha Christie was married to an archaeologist; the author of *Jurrassic Park* (Michael Crichton) received a B.A. in anthropology at Harvard; Prince Charles majored in archaeology and anthropology his first year at Cambridge; and Grammy award winning singer/songwriter Tracy Chapman, writer Kurt Vonnegut, and the creator of "The Far Side" comic (Gary Larson) all studied anthropology in university. Students also find interesting, if not enlightening, the knowledge that such "classic" movies as *Beach Blanket Bingo* and *Amazon Women in the Avocado Jungle of Death* included anthropologists as characters.

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As measured by student comments, I have had overwhelming success with each of these techniques. Besides being entertaining and easing the transition to a learning mode, using current events, movies, music, and trivia stimulates student interest in the discipline.

Robert Muckle, *Instructor, Anthropology*

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Cultural Diversity for Faculty and Curriculum Development

Arts and sciences division faculty at Midlands Technical College used South Carolina Commission on Higher Education grant monies ($5,000) to develop a system for internationalizing and diversifying 27 designated English, humanities, and reading courses. Five cultures were selected as the focus of the grant—African, African American, Hispanic, Japanese, and Native American. The choice of cultures was based largely on student representation and faculty interest.

Each of five faculty members researched one of the selected cultures and produced an annotated bibliography of English-language (original or translation) films and works of fiction, nonfiction, drama, and poetry. Researchers selected works for the bibliography according to the value and appropriateness of each work for our particular student body, for our general education core curriculum, and for the designated English, humanities, and reading courses. The bibliographies include annotations of 200 films and literary works.

Twenty-one arts and sciences faculty were enlisted as reviewers of the literature and films. These reviewers were chosen on the basis of their teaching areas, as well as their personal interests and expertise. Each reviewer evaluated materials from all five cultures and determined appropriate methods of using these works in specified courses. Their suggestions included detailed strategies for student assignments and classroom instruction. The tangible product of the process is *Cultural Diversity: Resources and Strategies*, which contains the five annotated bibliographies and the reviews suggesting effective methods of incorporating literature and films into each of the 27 designated courses.

The intangible results, however, reflect the actual benefits of the process. In the words of one faculty reviewer, it was "a personal journey of discovery." Some faculty discussed the literary works and their potential as instructional materials with their colleagues. Others talked about the new linkages that the multicultural emphasis had developed among disciplines. Even when the deadline for submitting the bibliographies or the reviews had passed, some faculty continued to submit suggestions, not because they were remiss with their assignments but because they had chosen to continue to research and to read. This process, then, has provided an opportunity for faculty to develop individual interests.

The curriculum, too, has begun to change. The English faculty has adopted readers with a multicultural emphasis for the two entry-level courses, and the theater faculty has incorporated Japanese No plays into their courses. One faculty member reported that the inclusion of a Nigerian novel into her course resulted in more enthusiastic participation and better quality of work from her students: "I had never had students better able to incorporate textual references into their essays."

This process has fostered positive curriculum, faculty development, and student responses. Some faculty members have requested periodic seminars to introduce and discuss multicultural works and their curricula possibilities. The faculty's enthusiasm for this project and *Cultural Diversity* has broadened the cultural horizons at our college.

Jean Mahaffey, *Dean, Arts and Sciences*

Tyler Smith, *Instructor, English, and Director, Cultural Diversity Grant*

For further information, contact Jean Mahaffey at Midlands Technical College, Box 2408, Columbia, SC 29202.

Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

February 25, 1994, Vol. XVI, No. 6
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INNOVATION ABSTRACTS is a publication of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD), Department of Educational Administration, College of Education, EDB 348, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, (512) 471-7545. Funding in part by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Sid W. Richardson Foundation. Issued weekly when classes are in session during fall and spring terms. ISSN 0199-106X.

VOLUME XVI, NUMBER 7

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (NISOD), COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN • WITH SUPPORT FROM THE W. K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION AND THE SID W. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION

Why Students Must Be Held Accountable for Their Writing

Not long ago, a colleague stopped by my office to bemoan the quality of his students' writing; in his hands were several research papers. As I recall, one paper had 52 misspelled words on one page; another contained about 100 words—written in large script to "fill the page"; another was written in incomplete sentences. Inherent in my colleague's comment was the often unspoken, but nevertheless believed, notion that the English department is not doing its job, that students cannot write because we have not taught them.

My main comment in response, defense, retaliation to my colleague was that he has every right not to accept any paper of poor quality for a passing grade and has the right to reject a paper that obviously did not meet his standards for competence. I must admit to sputtering these remarks and not making a very coherent response in defense of all of us who (whether we like this terminology or not) are in the trenches.

You probably can guess the rest. Once alone, I thought of a dozen better, more cogent, more useful responses that I should have given and, even more tardily, I felt angry at myself and at my colleague. So here it is—my response to all of you out there who *require* writing in your classes but are not adamant about demanding competent writing and holding students accountable for what they put on paper and how they put it there. Yes, spelling should count.

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The concept of writing across the curriculum (or writing to learn) works only if the required writing is evaluated in some way and at some level of expertise. I am referring to any type of writing: essay questions, short answer, term papers, book reports, research projects, and the like. The standards of writing competence by which papers are judged may vary among instructors, but if students are not shown that the quality of their writing eventually counts in the classroom, they never will be concerned about quality. They will learn to value quantity over quality, and they will learn minimum effort will earn a passing grade. In short, they will have learned well what you taught them—e.g., that correctness does not really matter and that they will be forgiven for not knowing much about spelling, or punctuation, or sentence structure, or style, or any other element used to present their ideas.

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Failing to evaluate students' writing undercuts, cheats, and demeans every party involved in the educational process. It cheats students because it teaches them the lesson that incompetence in their language is acceptable and that English teachers are the only ones who care about the quality of their writing. I am reminded of a recent conversation with a business communications student who, as an accounting major, was taking an upper-level accounting course. Her writing for me was very inconsistent, a B here, a D there. Her accounting instructor had assigned a research paper, but as the student so happily put it, "He don't mind about spelling mistakes and all them other things like you do." Perhaps *he don't* mind, but *I do*; and I think others in this student's career path also will mind. What lesson has been taught here? Clearly, it is that only the picky people in English instruction care about standards, that poor usage, written or spoken, only counts against you in English classes.

If only English teachers are perceived as caring about matters of style and correctness, then we become the villains in the educational sequence. We cannot win because we cannot get students beyond the idea that we are demanding, that our requirements are seriously out of touch with their other educational realities. Once this idea is entrenched, it subtly undermines all other faculty who use writing in their classes: "Don't take X's class because you'll have to do a term paper or write essay questions on your test."

Finally, requiring writing without holding students accountable for the quality of that writing violates the whole notion of educating students. As we send out more and more graduates who have never been made to master basic skills, we powerfully undermine their ability to function as workers, as parents, as social beings, as constituents of their world. We graduate

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people who *will* be held accountable as soon as the ink on their application is dry. Many of them will not be prepared to meet the basic demands of the work place; some may not even be successful in filling out the job application. All surely will be examined in light of the institution granting them their degree, and blame will be assigned. The true measure of a college's success is not how many graduate, but how *qualified* those graduates are. Thus, not making students responsible for the quality of their work undermines the value of the student, the teacher, and the college. We cannot afford to continue sending the schizophrenic signal that students should write but should not bother about the competence of their writing.

These are strong words, perhaps strong enough to evoke these responses: "Fine, I'll just stop requiring writing of any sort," or "Okay, I'll mark all that writing, but everyone will fail my class." As for the first response, you must not move backward in educating your students. We are late enough in picking up the writing-to-learn concept, and we simply cannot afford to lose more ground. You must keep using writing. It is the right thing to do. To the second response, you are correct. There may be more bad grades. That is part of what holding students accountable for their writing means. They must prove to you through writing that they understand accounting, or taxes, or economics, or pipe fitting, or marketing. The English faculty's task is to teach the language of language; your task is to teach students to use that language to write about your content area. If they cannot demonstrate competence in that skill, why is it that they deserve a college degree? Will an employer require less competence? Do law enforcement officers "tell" a final accident report? Does a real estate appraiser give an oral final estimate? Can any of us "call in" our taxes?

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What, then, can you do? I offer a few ideas for your consideration.

1. Explain from the first day of class that any writing will be evaluated, but just as quickly explain *how* you will evaluate it.
2. If you are unclear how to balance content against correctness, see someone in your English department for guidelines.
3. Avoid red ink; it sends all the wrong messages.
4. Do not try to do everything at once. Try one class at a time, or one test during the term, or one question on one test.
5. Require students to look at and read professional articles in their academic area. Make a point about the value of correctness.
6. Create a glossary of the most commonly misspelled words in your content area. Give the list to your students and keep adding.
7. Demonstrate that you and your English department are unified in valuing writing.
8. Use team teaching and assignment sharing to reinforce the value of writing in *all* areas of your school.
9. Realize that improvement of any skill comes with practice and reinforcement.

Sherry Sherrill, *Instructor, English*

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Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

March 4, 1994, Vol. XVI, No. 7

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VOLUME XVI, NUMBER 8

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (NISOD), COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN • WITH SUPPORT FROM THE W. K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION AND THE SID W. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION

Teacher as Student

After having brain surgery, I needed to relearn professional terminology before returning to the classroom, so I decided to take the class I had taught for 20 years. Fortunately, one very good teacher knew my situation and was willing to take me on. (It is a good idea to get a great teacher so you can practice some "legitimate plagiarism" the next time you teach the class!) In addition to the terminology, I learned a great deal more.

As a teacher, have you ever wondered how students feel in class, why they forget to buy a blue book, or why they worry more about their grade than what they are learning? I sure did. Now, as a student, I can look at all of these questions with, shall we say, a fresh brain. For one thing, students really do need the teacher to write down when the quiz or test is and what to bring (for example, a blue book). I always wondered why some students would be confused about that, but here I am, a student in the same boat. It is hard to believe that you can be in college and get days of the week and dates mixed up, but it is true. Even an intent student cannot listen every minute in a 50-minute class. (Ouch, I hate to know that!) In the future, I am going to hand out what my colleague who team taught with me always prepared for our class: a schedule that blocked off in squares each week stating exactly what was going to happen in class. I never copied it before because I felt it just made the semester syllabus and schedule run too long. After 20 years as a teacher, it is easy to forget how overwhelmed a student can be in college.

Another real surprise for me was laughter when I mentioned to students around me that I was eight pages short on reading for the quiz: they had read a great deal less. Apparently, many of these students believe that they can pass college classes without completing the assigned homework. When I went to college for the first time, I knew that if I screwed up, I flunked. These kids are going to find out in a much harder way, and they certainly do not appear to be students who "deserve it." They are not goof-offs, but rather students who have ambitions and good intentions. One even wants to be a teacher.

I had seen preliminary data on class study guides—data suggesting that students wanted them, but that they made no difference in test performance for many. I did not use mine, but it is clear that many students need help with studying prior to the test. One of the great techniques I learned and am going to borrow is a student-to-student review conducted in class. Each student is given a sample question on one of the test areas, and in groups of two or three they ask each other these questions. When each group finishes its questions, it switches questions with another. It makes clear to every student if he/she is ready for the test or needs further study.

I did not expect so few of the students to prepare answers to the essay questions the teacher gave them before the test. We knew that two of these questions would be on the test, and we had a week to work on them. In the future, I will spend class time working through an answer to an essay question and discussing how best to prepare for essay tests.

Sick leave almost has become a sabbatical; I have a renewed interest and involvement with my subject matter. When one has repeated an idea 40 or 50 times, it begins to appear that the idea is nothing special and that everybody knows it. And then, suddenly, before you is an enthusiastic teacher with a new style, and like all the other students, you want to hear the idea explained. That old idea is not ordinary at all—it is a great revelation. How nice it has been to have my excitement rekindled! Some of you might want to try it, too—but just remember that as student instead of teacher, you will be embarrassed to walk in a minute or two late!

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The Academic Warmup

During the first week of classes, my students are initiated into the ritual of the academic warmup. Upon entering the classroom, they pick up half-sheets of paper with questions to be answered, vocabulary words to be defined and/or discussed, situations to be analyzed, problems to be solved, or other academic activities. Students are asked to work in groups to complete the activities before class begins.

The warmup maximizes class time by involving students with course material from the minute they enter the room. While I am engaged in those activities which take up a teacher's time at the beginning of each class, students already are engaged in meaningful, focused academic activities.

The warmup activity provides a natural starting point for class. I often prepare the warmup sheets while I am planning a class, choosing questions or activities that form a bridge from the previous day's discussion to the current topic.

Some activities review topics; others explore student background knowledge (schemata activation) on a topic not yet introduced. Some activities require little more than regurgitation of text or lecture information; others require analysis, evaluation, and synthesis.

At the beginning of the semester, new vocabulary is often the subject of warmup activities—e.g., what is the function of a topic sentence? After the presentation of new concepts, warmups contain application activities—e.g., James has difficulty concentrating when he reads sociology; what strategies presented in Chapter 2 would be most useful in helping James develop better concentration? Prior to a test, warmups include sample test questions and force students to review key issues—e.g., what features of written material should be considered by the critical reader? At any point in the semester, warmup activities may contain tasks that promote critical thinking—e.g., read the editorial about gays in the military; list and evaluate the author's arguments. All warmup exercises should be discussed and debated within the groups.

Student interaction facilitated by the academic warmup produces many desirable results. After a few minutes of working through a warmup with a partner, the students are ready for class. Questions are answered quickly; after the pairs of students have come to a consensus and written an answer, they are prepared to share it with the class. Those who are uncertain about the validity of their answers are anxious to hear the ideas of others and often ask questions that lead all to greater understanding.

Another benefit of the warmup is the ease with which class cohesiveness develops. After the first few class periods, the students know each other by name and feel comfortable working in pairs or small groups. The relationships between students promote a sense of community within the class, allowing for greater freedom of discussion.

I have found that the benefits of the academic warmup are well worth the few minutes needed to prepare such exercises. I use half-sheets of paper because a smaller page is less intimidating for the students and for me. I have compiled file folders full of warmup exercises from past semesters and use many of them each term since vocabulary and key concepts do not change. Other times I write a question or two to tailor the warmup to a particular class or concept. Not every class session begins with a warmup, but the longer I use this technique the more I have come to rely on it.

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Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

March 11, 1994, Vol. XVI, No. 8

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VOLUME XVI, NUMBER 9

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Teaching Ethics Across the Curriculum

Every teacher a reading teacher! Every teacher a writing teacher! Every teacher a critical thinking teacher! When will it end? Maybe not just yet. Perhaps we need to add just one more assignment to the job of every teacher—teaching ethics. From St. Petersburg Junior College in Florida, where an applied ethics class is a requirement of all freshmen, to a range of business schools, where the study of ethics is, as one writer describes it, "almost a fad," educators are responding to a need expressed in the media as a national concern. A quick look at any periodical index indicates that dozens of articles appear monthly in magazines and scholarly journals exploring ethical issues, and the word *ethics* appears daily in several sections of our newspapers as crimes against principles continue to dominate the political, business, and arts news.

Educators have acknowledged that we need to help our students recognize ethical issues, and we need to give them the skills to think and talk about these issues. What goes on in the classroom should be a rehearsal for the boardroom, for committee meetings, for faculty meetings, for staff meetings—in short, for the real world. Across the curriculum, faculty should not be missing opportunities to increase student awareness of this important aspect of all academic disciplines and should be challenging students to think about it.

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How, then, can the work be done? While suggesting topics across the disciplines, I can propose a number of strategies to accommodate a variety of teaching and learning styles.

• The writing-across-the-curriculum programs in many of our nation's higher education institutions provide us with fine models. Ethics across the curriculum can be implemented more easily than writing across the curriculum and without additional costs.

The objective is to raise consciousness. It is important to note that what each teacher does is raise the consciousness of the students about ethical questions in her/his discipline, *not* make decisions about them. Each of us can define *ethics* early in the semester, as we might define *theme* in a literature class or *formula* in a math class or *revolution* in a history class, to establish a working vocabulary and make ethics part of the language of all courses across the disciplines.

Metadiscussions should be held. At any point, a teacher can say, "Have you noticed that what we are talking about is ethics (or morals or values clarification)?" The teacher might pose two or more ways of looking at the issue and ask students to argue on behalf of each, or if the topic warrants more time, the teacher might ask for a formal debate on the topic.

As we call attention to the learning objectives, so too can we call attention to ethical issues while we are discussing them. Naming issues brings them onto another level of consciousness.

• Values clarification exercises are excellent for those who wish or need to spend more time on specific ethical issues. Subject areas such as those in health sciences, business, and technology, where the issues are more in the national consciousness, may wish to employ small group discussion strategies to explore their topics. Also, teachers can use published values clarification exercises, or they can make up their own, using the others as models. Classics such as the time capsule, air raid shelter, survival, and agree/disagree statements can be adapted easily.

• Research papers are used successfully as a means for independent study in any discipline. Why not focus topics on ethics? Teachers can assign ethics in the media, ethics in the works of Tolstoy, ethics in genetic engineering research, ethics in advertising, ethics in cancer research, and ethics in the judicial system as topics for research.

• Study questions are an effective means of sparking class discussion, for they bring the student into class prepared with ideas. Ask students to find the ethical issues in a text assignment on software in accounting, or on the Civil War, or on nuclear medicine.

• The role of student services departments should be significant in any college's ethics program. Faculty should understand policies and procedures relating to cheating, plagiarism, attendance, and other topics which require policy cooperation between academic and student personnel.

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• The role of staff development programs is equally as significant as the role of student services. It is not enough to have dedicated faculty. Administrators must make time for teachers to get together, to talk about the opportunities to point out ethical problems in their disciplines, and to discuss what they believe to be the work ethic of teachers and their students. Each college has its culture, and teachers and students need time and the right environment to share their perceptions of the ethical nature of that culture. These discussions can be facilitated by the specialists on the faculty—speech and philosophy teachers. Further, the discussions might be arranged in the same fashion that one would want them to occur in the classroom—for example, in the small group format or a panel discussion. This is an especially good way to allow everyone on a large faculty to express opinions about the college's cultural characteristics.

Questions which might be discussed include: Is being on time to class part of the work ethic of the teacher, of the student? When a faculty member gives a number of tests without providing feedback on previous tests and adequately studying that feedback, is he/she breaching his/her professional ethics? The expectations faculty have of students might be shared with student services and included in their publications.

These metadiscussions may not result in curriculum and/or policy changes but rather in creating an atmosphere charged with the awareness of the ethical content of its situations. The hope is that ultimately, when our students are teachers, x-ray technicians, and management consultants, they will be aware of the ethical questions involved in their daily decisions. The sense of values instilled in them by a caring college community will influence the decisions they make.

The purpose of any study of ethics or any program in applied ethics *never* includes the generation of a code of ethics. The purpose is *never* to control, but rather to discover.

Angela A. Rapkin, *Professor, English, Reading and Foreign Languages*

For further information, contact the author at Manatee Community College, South Campus, P. O. Box 1849, Bradenton, FL 33506.

1994 NISOD CONFERENCE

THE SIXTEENTH ANNUAL

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• **The Student At Risk in the Community College**—William Moore, Jr., *A. M. Aikin Regents Chair, Community College Leadership Program, The University of Texas at Austin.*

• **A Vision of the Twenty-First Century**—Donald Phelps, *W. K. Kellogg Professor, Community College Leadership Program, The University of Texas at Austin.*

• **Improving Student Motivation**—John E. Roueche, *Sid W. Richardson Regents Chair, Community College Leadership Program, The University of Texas at Austin.*

★ **For more information**, *call 512/471-7545.*

Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

March 25, 1994, Vol. XVI, No. 9
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INNOVATION ABSTRACTS is a publication of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD), Department of Educational Administration, College of Education, EDB 348, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, (512) 471-7545. Funding in part by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Sid W. Richardson Foundation. Issued weekly when classes are in session during fall and spring terms. ISSN 0199-106X.

VOLUME XVI, NUMBER 10

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (NISOD), COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN • WITH SUPPORT FROM THE W. K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION AND THE SID W. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION

Structured Conversations

I have taught a number of Spanish conversation classes over the past 15 years, and they have ranged in quality from uninspired to truly exciting. When first assigned the course as a teaching assistant, I sighed with relief, thinking that little preparation would be necessary. I had visions of showing up for class and chatting in Spanish for 50 minutes with my students, who, of course, would have a number of interesting topics prepared for that day. Fortunately for all involved, I have learned a few things about teaching such a class over the years.

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One of the most valuable discoveries I have made is that a casual approach to a conversation class works only when all that is expected of the students is casual conversation. Unfortunately, the resulting conversation is usually laden with pauses, grammatical errors, and, inevitably, pleas for help. Somewhere in the middle of my first quarter of teaching Spanish conversation, I realized that even a casual course needed some structure as well as a means for evaluating student performance. Just as I had believed that little preparation was needed on my part, many students were hoping that this was the case for them as well, and they were performing accordingly.

Many students enroll in a conversation class with a number of misconceptions about what is required. Students may be surprised to learn that there is a required text, and, in some cases, an oral presentation assignment. Class participation usually is weighed heavily; and although the instructor may have emphasized this fact, inevitably the class will consist of students whose shyness, inhibitions, or apathy lead them not to participate. Grades, or other forms of evaluation, can be important motivating factors, but there must be some fair and objective criteria for assigning these grades.

A typical conversation class is comprised of 15 students, so I divide the class into three groups of five students each. Every student is assigned a role for each class period. The roles for each group are: one moderator, one reporter, and several participants. The moderator acts as the facilitator for the group, asking questions, keeping the conversation going, and assuring each student an equal amount of participation time. The reporter and participants take brief notes during the conversation. The participants are the heart of the group, doing most of the talking or responding to questions asked by the moderator or other participants. The teacher's role is to rotate from one group to another, listening, answering questions if they are asked, and making corrections when necessary in a subtle, nonthreatening manner. During the last 10-15 minutes, the class listens while the reporter from each group summarizes from notes what took place in their groups. This allows all students to hear the opinions of the other groups. They are allowed to express differing opinions and to question members of other groups. These final 10-15 minutes are often the most interesting, especially when students become aware of opposing opinions.

To ensure fairness in rotation of roles, I maintain an evaluation sheet on each student. This sheet includes preprinted dates for class meetings, and boxes containing the grades (poor, fair, good, excellent) can be checked after each class period. A separate box for comments is included, and students are encouraged to view their sheets as frequently as they wish (preferably after every class).

After some trial and error, I determined that it was best not to assign roles before the actual class meeting. Initially, students are leery of the moderator role and tend to be absent on the day they are assigned that particular task. Preassigning roles also tends to take pressure off the other students as far as preparation is concerned. They seem to feel that a participant or a reporter does not need to be as familiar with the material as the moderator. Assigning the roles at the beginning of each class works well; students are not sure what role they will fill for each day, and they come to class more uniformly prepared.

This system is a viable alternative to a casual approach to foreign language conversation classes. It allows for greater structure in a class that too often is allowed to disintegrate into a chat session. With this system, students become task-oriented while utilizing new grammatical structures and vocabulary in the target language. At the same time, they are gaining

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valuable experience which helps them develop several valuable skills: leading a group (moderator), note taking in a foreign language (reporter), listening (participants), and verbally expressing themselves (all members of the group). When these essential skills are gained through learning to use a foreign language, students feel an even greater sense of accomplishment.

Kathy S. Leonard, *Instructor, Foreign Languages*

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Chapter Reflections

It can be difficult to get students to do assigned reading, especially if the exam over the material in the reading assignments is still weeks away. One day I began my Interpersonal Communication class with a basic question from the reading assignment. Twenty blank faces stared back. I asked how many had read the chapter. No one raised a hand. I proceeded to lecture the class on the responsibilities of a student, when a voice from the back complained, "But the reading is so long and boring. It puts me to sleep." The rest of the class chimed in. I had to admit that although the text was up-to-date and accurate, it was not the most interesting reading. At this point I resolved to improve for next semester.

First, I began an intense book review process. Instead of just reading the table of contents for the basic concepts covered, I actually read chapters to get a feel for readability (publishers are more than happy to send review copies). I found and adopted a text that covered the subject well *and* was easy, even enjoyable reading.

The second step was to entice students into giving the text a try. On the first day of class, I took a few minutes to talk about how much time I had spent finding a text that would present the material in an interesting way and how thrilled I was with the selection. I warned students that as they read the text, they were likely to experience *déjà vu* as the text provided explanations for many of their communication habits and experiences. They were curious.

Then I designed a new class assignment which has been an invaluable improvement in the course. I wanted students to read the material before coming to class, but I was uneasy about giving pop tests or chapter quizzes. I decided on "chapter reflections." For every chapter students read, they must find one concept or idea that they have experienced and explain their experience with that concept in a one-page, handwritten paper. They are encouraged to use the chapter terminology to express the experience and demonstrate their understanding of the concept with examples. If they choose to challenge a concept that does not fit with their personal experience, they must explain why. They are encouraged to look at any moral or ethical considerations the concepts may present. The goal is to get the students to read the material actively and to relate their course studies to their personal experiences. Papers and assigned readings are due on the same day which ensures that most students come to class prepared.

What happened? It was magic! I came to class on the first lecture day prepared to lecture, but the class came prepared to *discuss*! Because the students had read the material actively, they already understood the basic concepts and were ready to apply the concepts to their daily experiences. We have had wonderful classes full of discussion thus far.

- Students read the chapters actively rather than passively.
- Critical thinking takes place in the class rather than just the memorization of terms and concepts.
- Papers help me assess the students' understanding of the material *before* the exams.
- Students recognize the value of the course as they relate the material directly to their own experiences.
- Students get constant feedback on their writing skills.
- I have come to know and treat my students as individuals.

Helen Tate, *Instructor, Speech*

For further information, contact the author at Lamar University at Orange, 410 Front Street, Orange, TX 77630.

Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

April 1, 1994, Vol. XVI, No. 10

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INNOVATION ABSTRACTS is a publication of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD), Department of Educational Administration, College of Education, EDB 348, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, (512) 471-7545. Funding in part by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Sid W. Richardson Foundation. Issued weekly when classes are in session during fall and spring terms. ISSN 0199-106X.

VOLUME XVI, NUMBER 11

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (NISOD), COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN • WITH SUPPORT FROM THE W. K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION AND THE SID W. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION

The "We Think" Project

The composition classroom is an opportunity to create an enjoyable community committed to exploring and learning about writing. Rather than focusing solely on the student-teacher dynamic, I ask my students to branch out and write for different audiences. In addition to writing letters to the editor and letters for social action, I require my students to write letters for their peers and the larger community.

An example of this assignment is the "We Think" project, which I initiate after a few weeks of my students' studying traditional rhetorical modes and basic mechanics. In brief, the class first reads and practices writing editorials and persuasive opinion pieces; within a month, each student writes three separate one- to two-page editorials and, during the final month of the project, revises one. Each anonymous essay is attached to posterboard, and all are hung in a public space for two weeks. (Last semester they hung in the university library; this semester they are hanging from a kiosk in the local mall.) Pencils are hung nearby, and we invite community comment. My students designed an eye-catching (yet slightly inflammatory) sign announcing the editorials: "We Think, Do You?"

This process-oriented project involves a variety of rhetorical tasks, such as critical thinking, pre-writing, persuasive writing, business writing, peer review, and editing. Freewrites and newspaper readings appear to be the best ways to initiate the project. Once a week, I read aloud brief editorials or newspaper articles and have the students freewrite responses for 10 or 15 minutes. Other freewrites include asking students to address things that anger them—the school, the town, or the world. This opportunity to reflect encourages creativity as well as specificity of thought. As one student said in reaction to a freewrite on the question of homosexuals in the military: "At first I hated doing this because it made me think. But then I realized that by thinking I was forced to have an opinion about it."

The students write the first two editorials after little instruction on editorial style or etiquette. I do this to create a sense of self-control: it is their work and their word, and it is not constrained by the teacher or by convention. However, this lack of teacher control is also difficult for them—they have no idea of what I want or what is "correct," so they worry that they are not "doing it right." Before the third editorial, however, I invite a journalism teacher to give a brief discussion on the standard goals and forms of editorials. This is an almost subversive testimonial: letting them flounder on their own sets them up to appreciate the formal structure. I like this because I think they can then incorporate convention into their own voice. In addition, incorporating the structure after they already have written two pieces emphasizes the importance of revision.

This revision process engages many of the skills important in a writing class, and the days students spend together revising their editorials puts the theory they heard in lectures into practice. The students first make revisions together in small groups, reevaluating their initial thoughts based on a number of factors: Does the introduction grab the reader? Is there a thesis? Does the editorial follow the main point to a worthwhile conclusion? Do the examples support the main point? Is there a call to action? Is it persuasive?

The week before the editorials are due, everyone makes three copies, and we put them all in a pile. I hand one to each student and leave the rest in the middle of the classroom. I use the chalkboard to remind students of things to look for in a revision and instruct them to quickly and aggressively read as many essays as possible. I encourage questions, not negativity. Instead of "This stinks, cut it," I prefer "What is gained by this? I think it takes away from the main point." Of course, this ideal does not always work, but with so many people working on each essay, the good outweighs the bad. At the end of the session, everyone's essay has been read by at least four or five classmates.

Students then take their editorials (and peer suggestions) home to revise and return with an almost-final draft, ready for a final editing. We conduct the same multiple pass-around, focusing on proofreading and editing skills for punctuation and mechanics (this time being ruthless in the search for errors); then students take their drafts home and bring in the finished ver-

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sions, ready for public display. The combination of working alone and in a team reinforces the communal aspect of writing, as well as the need for personal responsibility. I offer comments, but I do not proofread their final versions; while it is hard for me to display editorials with grammar mistakes and rambling sentences, these are their essays, not mine, and I need to respect their voices.

Reaching out to a broader community also can incorporate aspects of business writing. While I do not normally bring business writing into this composition class, it is easy to describe and model a press release based on the "We Think" project. Therefore, in addition to each editorial, each student creates a press release and fact sheet to submit to the local media. Less than 100,000 people reside in our semi-rural county, so this project fits nicely with the local media's need for community-based reporting. Television, radio, and the local newspapers all report on the project, which again reinforces that writing can have value outside of the teacher-student realm.

This can be an extraordinary amount of work for the students. One woman wrote in her journal, "I am sick to death of revising the same editorial over and over again...I have learned to go through my writings and do cut-and-paste." However, the rewards in improved self-awareness and writing confidence more than outweigh the difficulties.

Writing for the public is a scary thought for some students, but since the editorials are anonymous, nobody need be excused out of shyness or fear. Indeed, public opinion and public discourse are motivating forces for the students, so I grade this project on effort and completion, not product. The students' flaws are instructive; and because their writing is not limited to the instructor or to their small response groups, students can see the importance of creating a worthwhile final draft. Oftentimes, one critical penciled reply, such as, "Are you not supposed to think before you write?" does more to encourage students to improve their writing than all of my classroom harping. In addition, the plentiful community responses illustrate more powerfully than any lecture how enjoyable it is to engage in an intellectual dialogue.

Randy Accetta, *Instructor, Writing*

For further information, contact the author at Pima Community College, 4907 East Broadway Boulevard, Tucson, AZ 85709-1010.

Taking Roll and Learning Names

Educators agree that teachers best "connect" with a class when they learn students' names and that students appreciate having others learn their names. The problem comes when an instructor faces three to five large classes (100-150 or more students). If you are one of those rare individuals who can march into a room of 50 strangers, shake hands all around, and immediately learn every name through association techniques, read no further. For the rest of us, here is a system I have found useful.

Give a 3x5 card to each student and ask for his/her name and an identifying characteristic. I always say, "Tell me something about yourself that will help me pick you out right away from this sea of faces. The more bizarre or unusual it is, the better." Do not accept such ephemera as "I am wearing a red sweater" or "I am in the second row, third to the right." Insist that it be some permanent physical or personal characteristic or some fact about the student that makes him or her unique from all the others. Most students will offer physical descriptions, but a few will offer more interesting characteristics, such as hobbies, unusual occupations, places visited, special interests, and the like.

Bring the cards to class daily, call names, and sort the cards into present and absent students. As the semester progresses, this chore takes less time and eventually will be unnecessary.

While no one can prove that learning students' names leads to more learning in class, I am convinced that it enhances discussions, personalizes the class for the students and teacher, and makes for a better experience all around.

William F. Mugleston, *Assistant Professor, History*

For further information, contact the author at East Georgia College, 237 Thigpen Drive, Swainsboro, GA 30401-2699.

Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

April 8, 1994, Vol. XVI, No. 11

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INNOVATION ABSTRACTS is a publication of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD), Department of Educational Administration, College of Education, EDB 348, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, (512) 471-7545. Funding in part by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Sid W. Richardson Foundation. Issued weekly when classes are in session during fall and spring terms. ISSN 0199-106X.

VOLUME XVI, NUMBER 12

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (NISOD), COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN • WITH SUPPORT FROM THE W. K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION AND THE SID W. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION

Experiential Learning: A Key to Self-Confidence, Transition, and Academic Success

Vermilion Community College Student Support Services is a federally funded TRIO program serving the needs of first-generation, low-income students, and/or students with disabilities. This population often finds difficulty succeeding in college due to factors beyond academic competency. The prospect of entering college is overwhelming for many students in our program; the transition from high school to college is difficult. We ask ourselves: How can a new college student without life skills transform poverty, negativism, academic discouragement, a disability, or societal degradation into useful academic, personal, and social college survival skills?

Success fosters success, yet we find that many high-risk students do not have the foundation of successful experiences that provide the building blocks for academic, personal, and social successes in college. A common element in their lives is the severe lack of self-confidence in their ability to succeed—whether it is taking a test or making a friend. Understanding the correlation between a person's self-confidence and academic, personal, and social success in college, Student Support Services designed a one-credit, summer bridge course entitled Transition to College that is free of charge to SSS participants.

Ely, Minnesota, in the heart of the Superior National Forest and on the doorstep to the million-acre Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW), is the perfect setting for our course. Coordinated with Ely's Voyageur Outward Bound School, this experiential eight-day learning course takes a comprehensive approach to helping students build, strengthen, and enhance essential academic, personal, and social survival skills. The students are challenged, limits are stretched, and goal-setting capabilities are expanded. The expedition deep into the Boundary Waters immediately precedes the fall quarter and applies the skills obtained through experiential learning to the student's upcoming college experience.

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Program activities help students build confidence and trust, develop skills and self-identity, and experience a supportive environment. Several are described here.

***Introduction*:** Students identify self-interests, skills and abilities; complete pre-program self-evaluation; and become familiar with Vermilion Community College student resources and the Ely community.

***Cooperative Learning with Peers*:** Students participate in canoe capsize/rescue training (stretching physical limits), overcome the challenge wall as a group, enhance critical thinking skills, engage in teamwork, and receive portaging instruction.

***Rock Climbing*:** Students are involved in safety instruction/discussion, trust-building with teammates, risk-taking, goal-setting, building listening skills, discussing successes and failures, writing journals, and meeting camping responsibilities.

***Course Navigation*:** Paddling deep into the Boundary Waters, students navigate and learn how to read topographical maps of rivers, lakes, and streams. They deal with group conflict, express feelings and opinions, solve problems, make decisions, plan as a group, and learn to manage their time.

***Solo*:** Each student receives a small plastic tarp, sleeping bag, rain gear, a bag of granola, water bottle, and a whistle. Left alone on the shores of a lake, each is responsible for constructing a shelter and for recording his/her successes, failures, challenges, problem-solving activities, and instances of teamwork. Many students find their "solo" to be a pivotal turning point in helping them overcome fears of the unexpected—e.g., college classes, living away from home, relationship issues, friends, a new community, etc.

High Ropes Course: High above the ground in enormous pine trees, the rope, cable, and log events build students' self-confidence and concentration, improve their abilities to compliment and encourage others, and deal with fear and perceived failure.

***Personal Challenge Event (PCE)*:** The PCE consists of a six-mile, navigated paddle (into heavy winds), a one-mile portage, followed by a six-mile run. Some students set goals to complete the event in a specific time, others simply to finish. Students break through

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physical, emotional, and mental barriers; all successfully finish the event. A frequent comment after the PCE is "I never thought I would finish! If I can do this, I can do anything!" Learning to share success through accomplishment, realizing abilities and potential, and being willing to take risks and set goals are all part of the PCE experiential process.

Graduation: After an in-depth discussion of the course—what was learned, how these newly enhanced skills and abilities relate to entering college—and the completion of a post-program evaluation, students are presented with Outward Bound pins and certificates of completion. Students say:

- "This course showed me when I make a mistake it's alright; I just learn from it."
- "I have made a strong bond with great friends—even before college started!"
- "You can do anything if you work together and set goals."
- "A great transition to college!"
- "No matter how much support you have, it's up to you to decide to succeed."
- "A very good leaning experience, a chance of a lifetime!"
- "A real confidence builder, hard work equals success."
- "I've never had friends like this . . . they'll be my friends for a long time."
- "Experiencing being completely alone (solo) will definitely help me cope with being alone/away from home and those I love."
- "I can't believe I had a moose chewing on lily pad roots 10 feet from my tent!"
- "Very educational . . . I surpassed all my limits in the PCE!"

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Experiential learning is one means by which students may take risks, rediscover abilities, stretch limits, learn how to succeed, and deal with failure. Most importantly, students have the opportunity to view themselves in an environment of self-worth, where individuality is supported and encouraged by staff and students alike.

Rick C. Mikesh, *Counselor/Instructor, Student Support Services*

For further information, contact the author at Vermilion Community College, 1900 East Camp Street, Ely, MN 55731.

Announcing the sixteenth annual

International Conference on Teaching Excellence and Conference of Administrators

May 22-25, 1994 ★ Austin, Texas

The National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD)—based in the Department of Educational Administration, College of Education, The University of Texas at Austin—celebrates excellence in teaching and leadership through its annual conference, which attracts more than 1500 teachers and administrators each year. The event, co-sponsored by the League for Innovation in the Community College, will be held at the Hyatt Regency, Four Seasons, Omni, and Radisson hotels.

Monday, May 23
★ Ann W. Richards, *Governor of Texas*

Tuesday, May 24
★ Wilhelmina Delco, *Texas House of Representatives*

Wednesday, May 25
★ Tom Curley, *President and Publisher, USA Today*
★ Recognition of 1994 NISOD Excellence Award recipients. *President:* John and Suanne Roueche, *The University of Texas of Austin*

CONFERENCE OF ADMINISTRATORS

Monday, May 23
★ **Luncheon**, *12:00-1:30 p.m.*
Jacquelyn Belcher, *President, Minneapolis Community College, Minnesota*

★ **Afternoon session**, *2:00-4:00 p.m.*
Robert A. Gordon, *President, Humber College of Applied Arts and Technology, Ontario, Canada*

Tuesday, May 24
★ **Morning session**, *10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.*
Walter Bumphus, *President, Brookhaven College, Texas*, and Jan Brobst, *Vice President of Institutional Advancement, Brookhaven College, Texas*

★ **For more information,** *contact Suanne Roueche, Director, NISOD, at 512/471-7545.*

Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

April 15, 1994, Vol. XVI, No. 12
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INNOVATION ABSTRACTS is a publication of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD), Department of Educational Administration, College of Education, EDB 348, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, (512) 471-7545. Funding in part by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Sid W. Richardson Foundation. Issued weekly when classes are in session during fall and spring terms. ISSN 0199-106X.

VOLUME XVI, NUMBER 13

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (NISOD), COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN • WITH SUPPORT FROM THE W. K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION AND THE SID W. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION

Criminals in Literature

Eve, Oedipus, Hamlet, Hester Prynne, Malcolm X, Humbert Humbert—these are some of the characters my students have analyzed, prosecuted, and defended in the course, Criminals in Literature. From the Greek tragedies to Orwell's *1984*, many of our greatest literary works are stories of crime and punishment. Some, such as Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, are recognized classics of criminal psychology. Other works, not generally considered crime stories, take on new dimensions when approached as studies of criminal behavior—or behavior judged to be criminal. The story of Jesus in *The New Testament* is of a man arrested, tried, convicted, and executed as a traitor. By the standards of his slaveholding society, Huck Finn abets a serious theft of property in helping a slave escape. Huck's adventures expose him to a world of adults engaged in murder, robbery, feuds, duels, and child abuse.

Criminals in Literature is one of several course options (including Life Stages, Film and Fiction, the traditional Introduction to Literature, and others) which students may choose to fulfill the Composition II requirement at our college. The focus on crime gives the course thematic cohesion and provides a clear basis for comparing seemingly disparate authors. At the same time, students are introduced to literature in a variety of genres from various cultures and historical periods. In their first writing assignment, students create literature; each student narrates, in first person, a crime story in which the narrator reveals and dramatizes the motives for his criminal act(s). Subsequent writing assignments are analytical and argumentative. Students analyze the motives, the values, the internal conflicts, and life circumstances of characters who commit crimes, as well as the political and moral values of the societies which judge certain behaviors as criminal. Students often choose topics which require them to prosecute or defend a character. The challenge of arguing guilt or innocence (whether legal or moral) stimulates them to develop skills necessary in any form of critical thinking and writing. They must state a precise thesis; interpret a text and select supporting evidence which is specific, relevant, and persuasive; refute opposing views; and marshal their arguments into a coherent, well-reasoned essay.

The value and appeal of literature lie in its ability to draw us into the viewpoint of any character, whether it be the hero who slays the monster in *Beowulf* or the monster himself as depicted in John Gardner's *Grendel*. The study of how criminals are portrayed in literature is a particularly effective way to get students thinking about the dynamics and the significance of narrative point of view.

Throughout the course we consider questions of perspective and judgment. Who is telling us about this crime and why? Who is judging this behavior as criminal and why? Can we trust the narrator? What techniques are used to direct our sympathy toward this character rather than that one? One idea that helps to hold the course together is that readers are like jurors. Both are told a story, or versions of a story, about events involving strangers. Both are given some, but not all, points of view. Both must make inferences about the motives and reliability of the witnesses who appear before them, compare possible interpretations, and decide on the meaning or truth of the story they have been told. A good reader, like a good juror, is an attentive, thoughtful, independent-minded member of a community.

Several times each semester we break from our customary class discussion to conduct a mock trial, a format which can work in any literature course but which is especially well-suited to the study of literary criminals. We have prosecuted both Antigone and Creon. We have tried Dr. Jekyll for the crimes of Mr. Hyde, raising issues of intent and criminal responsibility. We have put Ben Franklin's heroine, Polly Baker, on the stand and heard her plea that she should be memorialized, not fined, for bearing illegitimate children. Students choose their roles as defendants, prosecutors, defense attorneys, witnesses, and jury members. We spend several class periods in small groups preparing trial strategy and several periods acting out the trial itself. In addition to generating interest and cooperation among students, this format encourages them to study the assigned text in depth so they can perform their roles with some self-assurance. It also helps students to clarify and articulate their responses to the literature; once they have testified and

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deliberated with their classmates, they are better able to express their interpretations in writing. The most bashful, self-doubting student often blossoms into a relentless prosecutor, an ingeniously self-justifying Dr. Jekyll, or an indignant, impassioned Polly Baker.

Criminals in Literature could be offered as a literature elective or an interdisciplinary course. Some knowledge of the law is helpful to the instructor, especially in defining certain acts as crimes, but legal expertise is not essential. I tell my students I am an English teacher, not a lawyer or police officer. If I am unable to answer technical questions about the law, I direct them to more reliable sources of information.

The course has special appeal for students in certain career programs (e.g., criminal justice, paralegal), but it also draws many liberal arts students as well as those enrolled in other career programs. Students vary in their enthusiasm and aptitude for the study of literature, but they share a bond as members of a society governed by a code of laws. Moreover, with few exceptions, they are fascinated by stories of crime.

John Nelson, *Professor, English*

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Teaching the Paralegal

The United States Department of Labor predicts that by the year 2000 the paralegal profession will increase its workforce by 40 percent. Colleges and universities are responding to the need to train paralegals by offering paralegal courses as a component of a business curriculum, and degrees in paralegal studies. Cuyahoga Community College offers both an Associate Degree of Applied Business with an emphasis in paralegal studies and, for students who already have obtained an undergraduate degree, a Paralegal Award of Competency. The first paralegal class will graduate in June of 1993.

As we prepare for program accreditation by the American Bar Association, we are reviewing both the successes and failures that we have encountered during the two years that our program has existed. Our experiences could assist other institutions which offer similar courses.

Paralegals must be taught legal concepts and practical applications of these concepts in order to provide effective assistance to attorneys. Our program employs lawyers to teach our students these concepts. However, just as the legal profession is struggling to decide how best to use paralegals, we have discovered that lawyers, although qualified to practice in a specific area of law, are not necessarily qualified or prepared to teach paralegals. Our teaching-lawyers, therefore, either have been paralegals or have been involved in paralegal training. In addition, we invite practicing paralegals into the classroom. This "teaching team" approach introduces our students to the subject matter being taught and illustrates the separate and distinct roles of attorneys and paralegals.

Input from the legal community helps monitor the appropriateness of both the courses taught and the types of projects assigned. Our course offerings and content also are reviewed by an advisory committee. The advisory committee is comprised of practicing paralegals and attorneys. Further, we contact other institutions that offer paralegal courses in order to share ideas.

Our paralegal students are provided extensive hands-on experience in law application. In our business organization course we require students to set up a corporation, create a partnership, and draft an employment agreement; in our debtor-creditor course we require students to complete a filing for a bankruptcy; and in our probate course we require students to complete the process of administering an estate. Such techniques facilitate the understanding of difficult legal concepts, encourage student participation, and prepare the paralegal for the "real world."

We complete our students' hands-on experiences by placing them in a law firm, a court, or a business's legal department. Each student is required to complete 150 hours of paralegal work. In addition, students meet with an instructor to review the type of work being performed and receive advice from both their classmates and the instructor. Although work experiences are shared, confidentiality is emphasized.

Our experience has shown us that to properly educate paralegals, traditional classroom techniques—e.g., exams and reporting—must be supplemented with practical projects which simulate working conditions. Paralegal teachers must be trained or educated in the law; however, to be truly effective they also must understand the paralegal's role.

Ellen Constance Spielman, *Lecturer, Paralegal Studies*

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Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

April 22, 1994, Vol. XVI, No. 13

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INNOVATION ABSTRACTS is a publication of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD), Department of Educational Administration, College of Education, EDB 348, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, (512) 471-7545. Funding in part by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Sid W. Richardson Foundation. Issued weekly when classes are in session during fall and spring terms. ISSN 0199-106X.

VOLUME XVI, NUMBER 14

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (NISOD), COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN • WITH SUPPORT FROM THE W. K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION AND THE SID W. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION

Interactive Drama: Learning About Community Concerns

Few of our students take the initiative to go to the theater district. As those of us who teach humanities and English courses discussed these appalling numbers among ourselves, we were led to question the place theater has in American education and the role of the instructor—the individual who should provide the initial spark to turn the apathetic student into an enthusiastic and discriminating theatergoer.

We believed that the answers might be in the very origins of theater, as the effective recorder of human activities in general and, more explicitly, the human dimension of life in America. However, we agreed the answers may not always be found in the traditional format by which theater has been taught: theater as an adjunct of dramatic literature (either in the English department or the humanities core), theater as a performing art (Theater/Arts department), environmental theater (taking place in a "found" or transformed space), and living theatre (rebellious language, nudity, and opposing all theatrical conventions).

We believed the answers might lie in the rituals of old relationships: the continuing saga of the basic conflicts between the powerful and the oppressed, the educated and the uneducated, the rich and the poor. In our large metropolitan areas—Miami-Dade Community College, Medical Center Campus is located in the heart of the blighted Overtown area of Miami—these relationships are even more dramatic: crime, illicit sex/drugs, hookers, pimps, porno shops, and muggers. In Miami, today's homeless population has become larger and more visible due to the combined destructive forces of Hurricane Andrew and unemployment.

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It is the nature of theater to provide a true stage that empowers human beings into working collectively in a creative act. It takes a number of people for any production to take place. Putting on a play such as *Las Casas*, an interactive drama highlighting human dignity, has set the stage for the homeless to participate with students, faculty, and college staff, thanks to its labor intensive nature. *Las Casas* dramatizes the tormentous life of the 16th century priest, Father Bartolome de Las Casas, and gives 17 students with interest in a health care profession the opportunity to work with a group of 15 homeless men in acting, building and painting the stage and scenery, designing costumes, applying make-up, and so on.

One might question the validity of bringing together so many students, faculty, staff, and community members—who have been conditioned by television to easy solutions to many of life's problems—to watch a historical theatrical drama. The immediacy of theater is perhaps its saving grace: the drama of the homeless being abused on stage by Spanish soldiers and the Spanish priest being punished by the Inquisition provide a strange continuum of present-day abuses.

Interactive drama also has the magic, meaning, and effect of actors becoming resource persons who provide information about the character or the issues revealed in the dialogues/monologues. The playbill includes useful information about the homeless as well as common myths about them. The question-and-answer session after the play provides the audience the opportunity to ask probing questions about the historicity of *Las Casas*, as well as the plight of the homeless.

A pre-med major said it best when describing his experience of working (30 hours rehearsal time) with the homeless: "I learned more from them than I have all my life. They showed me a lot about self-respect that they have for themselves that sometimes I do not have for myself."

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The ABC's of Interactive Drama

- Find a historical figure, factual or fictional, easy to identify with an issue of community interest.
- Write the script yourself or have a student or a group of students work in collaboration in script writing.
- Choose actors and actresses either by public auditions and/or voluntary recruitment efforts on campus and community.
- Designate a flexible rehearsal schedule not only as actual practice of the play but also as "getting to know each other" time. Students and community members will have a sense of the performance as a truly collaborative creative effort.
- The script must not be etched in stone; rather, the script must allow for improvised action, thus providing

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the subterfuge for extemporaneous speeches by actors who may substitute lines from the script with their own words, putting forth their own dramatic lives, expressions, and gestures.

• Involve as many participants as you can: students can be stage managers, stage hands, costume designers/prop makers, lighting and sound (some schools require duly qualified electricians for this task), etc.

• On the day of the performance, before curtain time, briefly inform the audience about the play and hold a brief discussion (monitored by an "expert") after the performance. The playbill can include brief biographies of actors and/or characters in the play and a brief outline of the issues, myths, and relevant information about the issue.

• You may give the audience a chance to evaluate the entire interactive experience via questionnaire.

• A follow-up activity might be the preparation of a video of the performance and an information packet (with press releases, articles, and audience reactions to the play) for further inclusion in an intensive interdisciplinary, intercultural, and intergeneric framework of studies.

Alberto Meza, *Associate Professor, Humanities and English*

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A Freewriting Boost

Freewriting breaks writing blocks, develops ideas, and explores new areas of composition topics. Early in the term I spend some time talking about freewriting and the way each student must approach this exercise. Peter Elbow explains this process best: "Never stop [writing] to look back, to cross something out, to wonder how to spell something, to wonder what word or thought to use, or to think about what you are doing...[t]he only requirement is that you never stop." Most students need to start slowly with this activity because the idea of seemingly careless writing is new to them. I usually lead the class in brief writing "sprints" of about one minute each for the first week or two of class. This way each student gets the feel of nonstop writing. From these short exercises I gradually extend the writing to about five minutes.

The freewriting exercise eventually works as a kind of cognitive prologue for each class period. Students must focus quickly on a topic and a task. This helps to direct each student's attention to the current learning environment rather than to a previous class, recent conversations, or the daily rush to arrive on time. In addition, writing is an excellent tool to promote learning; whether the class is composition or math, freewriting will help students reinforce course material. During this quiet time an instructor may take role, prepare a class lecture and lesson, or join the community of student writers, thereby reinforcing the message of a shared learning environment.

Freewriting also serves as continuing practice sessions for writir g and understanding essay topics. Early in the term, when I ask students to come to class with broad topics based on current readings or lessons, they usually offer: "Write about [topic]." When this happens I take a moment to focus the topic: "Specifically, what do you want to ask about this topic?" or "Try to rephrase your statement into a question starting with 'How,' 'What,' 'Why,' or 'Who.'" By developing a focused topic, the students' freewriting will have a specific purpose and will allow them to design the focused questions required in academic writing. Soon students begin to construct clear and precise freewriting topic questions on their own—a clue that they are becoming more focused thinkers.

I periodically collect and review each student's freewriting and make it part of an attendance/participation grade (usually 20% of the course grade). There can be no right or wrong freewriting responses, so students who are on time to class get full credit—this proves to be a real incentive for many class stragglers! When I give students the freedom to choose topics and to write within a loosely controlled framework, they respond by gaining control of course material through reinforcement, developing an understanding of topic focus, and expanding their thoughts through writing to a community of peers. Instructors can feel confident in using this exercise as a means to jump-start class sessions in any course across the curriculum.

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Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

April 29, 1994, Vol. XVI, No. 14

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INNOVATION ABSTRACTS is a publication of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD), Department of Educational Administration, College of Education, EDB 348, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, (512) 471-7545 Funding in part by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Sid W. Richardson Foundation. Issued weekly when classes are in session during fall and spring terms. ISSN 0199-106X.

VOLUME XVI, NUMBER 15

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (NISOD), COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN • WITH SUPPORT FROM THE W. K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION AND THE SID W. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION

Assessing Instructional Strategies

For the community college instructor, nothing can be more frustrating and counterproductive than when an instructional strategy proves unsuccessful. Even the most skilled and competent professional is tempted to discard the activity altogether. But why and how does one activity work so well with one group of students, then falls apart with another, even when the class groups are doing well, testing successfully, and have prerequisite skills? A thorough, methodical review of one's instructional strategy pool is enlightening.

Developing criteria for the review of the instructional arsenal may be a useful strategy for evaluating the effectiveness of various class activities. The process must be deliberate, thorough, and judgmental. Directly, it may result in changes in course objectives and methodology. Indirectly, it may result in redefining one's professional goals and one's philosophy of teaching and student learning.

The process could be initiated anytime following the first years of teaching. Assessment of instructional strategies is highly individualized and ultimately focuses on improving instructional delivery. The benefits for the instructor are greater self-confidence in the classroom, a willingness to take risks in instruction, and a reinvigorated, positive classroom environment.

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The assessment criteria can be modified and reworked to accommodate specific academic fields.

• **Age of the Activity**: How long has the strategy been used? Was the activity dependent on a specific time frame? For example, an analysis of the Carter-Ford debate may not be valid for use in the analysis of the 1992 presidential election. Was the strategy valid for the 1970s, but not valid for the 1990s?

• **Student Reactions**: Did the activity fail to achieve the desired student outcomes more than two or three times? Were conditions similar or different when the activity did not live up to one's expectations? How did students react to the activity? Were they interested, bored, challenged? Did they perceive the activity as useful?

• **Student Demographics**: Were the activities geared to the interests and skills of the class? A class of adults debating changes in national tax policy may be more successful with that debate than would a group of 18- to 20-year-olds.

• **Intended Purpose/Outcome**: What was the purpose of the activity? Some activities (small group discussion, for example) serve multiple purposes. How were purposes and outcomes weighed? A brainstorming activity in the first class session may have as its only purpose to "break the ice" and to establish a positive classroom climate.

• **Timing/Orchestration**: When was the strategy implemented? A demanding lecture may be more effective when presented following a small group discussion. A carefully planned "fun" but academically legitimate activity may ease the tension students typically experience at mid-semester.

• **Upgrading/Revision**: Has the activity been revised? Have student guidelines and handouts been reworked? Has material been added or deleted to improve quality and relevancy?

• **Instructor Compatibility**: Are the activity and the instructor compatible? Did the activity feel right and comfortable? An instructional strategy that is compatible with one's personality and instructional style has more potential for success than an activity that is not comfortable or natural.

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As professionals work to assess their own teaching and their student's learning, developing appropriate criteria for evaluating instructional strategies is critical. The objectives are to maximize success, to minimize failures, and to reinvest in the excitement and enthusiasm inherent in the teaching experience.

Richard Moorman, *Instructor, History*

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Taking the Spanish Class to the Nontraditional Student

When an instructor was hired to teach conversational Spanish to employees of the poultry industry in the Blue Ridge Community College service area, there were no precedents for such a venture, no guidelines, no commitment from the employees to study Spanish, and no time line. What developed was remarkable! The project was so successful it could be a model for similar projects.

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The instructor's mandate was to teach Spanish to frontline supervisors, human resource leaders, and nurses, as well as to secretaries and executives who would be working with residents of Spanish-speaking countries. Teaching conversational Spanish to these employees required nontraditional language instruction. Some had never considered studying Spanish. But faced with increasing numbers of Hispanic workers, supervisors felt the need to communicate more efficiently and effectively.

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After consultation with industry officials, these guidelines were developed:

- A course of eight weeks, a class period of one to one and a half hours once a week per level, held at each industry for each of three area poultry companies, a rotation of course instruction among the various job sites every eight weeks, an intensive two-day executive workshop four hours daily.
- A schedule that allowed workers to attend class during or between shifts, including a class from 10:30 p.m. to midnight.
- A class format that allowed significant portions of time for one-to-one practice.
- Materials that presented the Spanish vocabulary opposite the English translation for "memorization and rote learning," followed by illustrations of the vocabulary that would allow for additional practice and learning without using English.
- Class participation that included the almost exclusive use of Spanish, helpful phrases such as "I do not know," "I do not understand," and "How do you say...?" presented and reviewed so that the students must communicate in Spanish from the first day.
- Avoiding the traditional presentation of grammar, verb study in the first weeks limited to present preterite indicative and formal commands.
- A section of each class covering cultural aspects of the language, including Hispanic traditions.
- One Hispanic worker at each site to attend every class and answer questions about vocabulary and culture, and relate to other workers the content and progress of the class.

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Teaching on site has more than tripled the number of students who register for beginning Spanish classes. Every student has noticed a difference in the workplace. Some students have been eager to use the language immediately. Some have spoken a foreign language for the first time. Some have felt odd saying unfamiliar words and have experienced the same emotions their international employees have felt speaking English. All have noticed how positively their employees have greeted their efforts.

This short course has left students wishing for more. Two additional levels of instruction will be developed and presented over three years. The supervisors have learned the fundamentals of the language that will allow them to continue to learn from the employees. The Hispanic employees are delighted. It is clear that the supervisors are not learning Spanish so that their employees do not have to learn English, but rather they are learning Spanish to enhance communication. Two cultures are learning about each other in a positive way.

Nell G. Tiller, *Instructor, Spanish, and Liaison to the Poultry Industry*

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Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

May 6, 1994, Vol. XVI, No. 15

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INNOVATION ABSTRACTS is a publication of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD), Department of Educational Administration, College of Education, EDB 348, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, (512) 471-7545. Funding in part by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Sid W. Richardson Foundation. Issued weekly when classes are in session during fall and spring terms. ISSN 0199-106X.

VOLUME XVI, NUMBER 16

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (NISOD), COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN • WITH SUPPORT FROM THE W.K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION AND THE SID W. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION

Talk-Alouds: Windows on the Mind

It is the instructor's dilemma—assessing students by giving tests and then wondering what the scores really tell us. Julie received a 67 on her first chemistry exam. What does this really mean? Does she not understand the concepts? Does she not have an adequate mathematical background? Is she confused about the periodic table? Should I reteach some content, or do I need to go back to a more basic level?

Questions such as these have plagued instructors and educational psychologists since the study of learning began. How can we see into the proverbial black box? As newer models of learning and thinking are developed, we are aware that it is increasingly important to understand thought processes that lead to individual learning strengths and weaknesses. By understanding these processes, we can better tailor instruction to be more effective and efficient for individual students.

Unfortunately, we have no direct method of diagnosing students' problems with thought processes that underlie learning and thinking. Although direct assessment of process knowledge is extremely difficult, we can diagnose problem areas indirectly by using talk-aloud procedures—having students verbalize their thought processes as they are performing a task or after they have completed it. For example, during a class discussion in algebra, the instructor could ask a student to solve a problem and instruct the student to say aloud everything she thinks as she attempts to solve the problem. This gives the instructor, as well as the students, a good idea of the processes that the student is going through to arrive at the product. It is an effective and efficient way of catching misconceptions which may be common to the class and correcting those mistakes immediately instead of waiting until after the test.

Talk-alouds give us a window on the mind. By getting students to tell us what they are thinking and doing as they try to learn from a textbook, solve a problem, make a decision, or analyze a poem, we get a glimpse into their minds. We also gain a database for helping us diagnose any misunderstanding, confusion, lack of knowledge, or poorly developed thinking skills.

Some General Guidelines for Student Talk-Alouds

- Keep the students talking.
- Encourage students to say *what* they are thinking and not to stop and analyze *why* they are thinking it.
- Expect false starts and blind alleys. Process is not a superhighway with one thought speeding to a correct product. Process wanders and meanders and comes up with dead ends, only to start on a new path. This is normal, and the students should feel comfortable if their talk-aloud does not sound polished and succinct.
- Try to diagnose strengths and weaknesses: Students have the concept or process up to what point? Why are they having problems with the concept or process? Do they have a gap in their knowledge? Do they use the wrong method? Do they misunderstand what is being asked?

The talk-aloud method does have certain limitations. First, it may not work with students who have poor verbal skills, such as foreign students who are able to produce the product in English, but who still go through the process in their first language. Second, at times it may be difficult, if not impossible, to articulate the thought processes that are being used. For example, a student may have the process so routinized that, given a problem to solve, he immediately gives an answer and then says, "Well, I just knew it!" In this case, the student may be unable to break down the process into its elementary steps. Third, if the talk-aloud is not conducted at the same time that students are working the problem and they are required to think about their thinking process retrospectively, they may not recall their thought processes correctly.

Talk-alouds have an even greater use than diagnosing student problems. As difficult as we find it to peer into student minds, we must remember that our students find it equally frustrating to peer into ours. Just because we understand our own thought processes does not mean that those processes are transparent to our students. Modeling is a powerful instructional tool that instructors often use. The thought processes instructors use to arrive at conclusions, solve problems, analyze situations, and make decisions would be extremely helpful for the students to witness—including the same false starts we expect our students to make and the same blind alleys we expect them to go down.

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Some General Guidelines for Using Teacher Talk-Alouds

- Keep talking about process even as you introduce content.
- Focus on explaining the steps you are taking, and give students a rationale for the importance of that process so they will understand *what* you are doing and *why* it is important for them to do it, too.
- Do mention your own false starts and blind alleys.
- Try to diagnose your own strengths and weaknesses. For example, go through the decision points you make: Do you need to restate the problem? What will you do first? Is your strategy working? If not, what can you do? Is the end result correct? How can you find out?

Although the talk-aloud method does not make the black box transparent, it does provide a window for us to see into students' minds and for our students to see into ours. Identifying students' processing strengths and weaknesses facilitates the learning process.

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August 26, 1994, Vol. XVI, No. 16

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INNOVATION ABSTRACTS is a publication of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD), Department of Educational Administration, College of Education, EDB 348, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, (512) 471-7545. Funding in part by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Sid W. Richardson Foundation. Issued weekly when classes are in session during fall and spring terms. ISSN 0199-106X.

VOLUME XVI, NUMBER 17

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (NISOD), COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN • WITH SUPPORT FROM THE W. K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION AND THE SID W. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION

A Cross-Divisional Project

Humber College faculty and administrators consult with advisory committees, graduates and employers of graduates, to review and update curriculum. Responding to industry needs ensures that our curriculum is on the leading edge and that our graduates are ready to enter the workforce. Usually, the feedback we receive from our clientele deals with the skills and knowledge required to do the job. Recently, however, academic research and feedback from employers have identified other important qualities.

In 1992, the Corporate Council on Education published "Employability Skills Profile: The Critical Skills Required in the Canadian Workforce." This document reinforced the need for such life skills as improved communications, problem solving, etc., as essential qualities employers want. In many courses, some of these skills are taught at the subject level with homogeneous groups of students. Group work and in-class presentations teach problem solving.

My colleagues and I concluded that a more meaningful way to incorporate these life skills would be by crossing the traditional divisional boundaries and having students work in teams. The cross-divisional project invited students from three disciplines to work on a joint project which involved using life skills as part of the process. The students were selected from three programs—Industrial Design, Marketing, and Mechanical Engineering Technology. The assignment was to work in teams, to choose a product and work through its design, marketing, and production. This process, in effect, simulated the real world and how employees in different areas of expertise work together toward common goals. The goal was to produce the product using course-related skills and knowledge. Learning outcomes included the following:

- **Teamwork**: Working together in teams to achieve a common goal. Understanding what professionals do and how they contribute within the culture of groups.
- **Problem Solving**: Respecting other people's opinions, negotiating, and compromising. Identifying objectives and using a mature approach to problem solving.
- **Communications**: Developing good listening skills and the ability to articulate one's position in the group assignment. Raising one's confidence and ability to make effective public presentations.
- **Human Relations**: Getting along with other people and developing a positive attitude toward self and others.
- **Learning to Learn**: Understanding that learning is a lifelong process in which new knowledge and skills can be acquired in many ways.

Many students volunteered to be part of the project, but, for logistical reasons, only 12 were selected. The students were divided into teams of six, two from each discipline. They were required to meet for two hours each week in addition to their normal class schedules. No extra credit was given for this commitment, although the work done on the joint project could be counted as a partial assignment toward other credit courses.

During the weekly meetings, some time was spent teaching the students the skills required to take them through the process. Topics included: group dynamics, giving and receiving feedback, one-way and two-way communication, problem solving, planning and organizing work, and making effective presentations. Guest speakers were invited from industry to speak about teamwork, brainstorming, and other issues in the process of design, marketing, and manufacturing new or existing products. Concurrent with these lessons, the students were applying some of these skills within their teams by selecting the product and deciding how to redesign and market it. A critical path was given to the students at the outset. Dates for a preliminary written report and interim presentation were set. Beyond that, the students were required to cooperate and resolve issues and concerns in their groups.

Two sets of student evaluations were administered. The results were positive in terms of the student's learning—precisely what the joint project was intended to improve and enhance.

Barrie J. Saxton, *Associate Principal*

For further information, contact the author at Humber College, Lakeshore Campus, 3199 Lakeshore Boulevard, West, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M8V 1K8.

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Orienting High School Students to College Design Programs

For many years, staff members of the Design School at Humber College have been involved in liaison activities with local high schools. The process has included an annual open house for high school students and teachers, "Discover Design Day," as well as periodic visits by faculty to local schools on career days.

There are a number of reasons why it is important to communicate with the high schools—other than marketing and public relations. For example, the entrance requirements into the design programs require all potential students to come to the college for an interview. As well, prospective students are required to present a substantial portfolio of their art work to demonstrate that they have the motivation and talent to succeed in their chosen program. Some students do not fare well at the interview stage because they are nervous, lack knowledge about the programs, or have a weak portfolio. Consequently, they score low on their interview evaluation and significantly reduce their chances of getting into their program of choice.

In 1993, at the suggestion of one of the visiting high school teachers, we tried a new approach to orienting students to the design programs. Thirty students from senior high school art classes were invited to attend college for one day. Two classes were offered, a life drawing class and a photography class. The activity took place in May after regular college classes were over, but when full-time faculty were still available to teach.

Because of the positive feedback we received from this group of 30 students, the program was held again in 1994 and expanded to include 50 students. The one-day format was continued, but the students were given a choice of selecting any two classes from a total of four. The classes offered were life drawing, automobile rendering, photographic studio, and darkroom techniques.

The students were asked to evaluate their day at the college and identified the following outcomes. The evaluations outlined the following benefits:

- getting to know how college classes are taught;
- seeing the facilities in the photo and design areas;
- deciding what program to take at college;
- developing a piece of work towards a portfolio; and
- having a look at Humber College.

This orientation program gives the high school students an opportunity to experience a typical class taught by a college professor. It gives the students an opportunity to see the facilities, get a sense of college academic standards, and become familiar with program entrance requirements.

Barrie J. Saxton, *Associate Principal*

For further information, contact the author at Humber College, Lakeshore Campus, 3199 Lakeshore Boulevard, West, Toronto, Ontario M8V 1K8, Canada.

Join us in Celebrating Teaching Excellence!

The National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD), The University of Texas at Austin, and the League for Innovation in the Community College invite you to celebrate excellence in teaching and leadership.

The 1995 International Conference on Teaching Excellence and **Conference of Administrators** will be held at the Austin Convention Center, **May 21-24, 1995**, in Austin, Texas.

We look forward to seeing you there!

Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

September 2, 1994, Vol. XVI, No. 17

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INNOVATION ABSTRACTS is a publication of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD), Department of Educational Administration, College of Education, EDB 348, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, (512) 471-7545. Funding in part by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Sid W. Richardson Foundation. Issued weekly when classes are in session during fall and spring terms. ISSN 0199-106X.

VOLUME XVI, NUMBER 18

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (NISOD) • COLLEGE OF EDUCATION • THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN • WITH SUPPORT FROM THE W. K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION AND THE SID W. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION

Does All This Technology Make a Difference?

Computer use in the "real world" has grown at a dizzying pace. We encounter computers and computer technology everywhere—at the check-out stand in point-of-sale terminals, in our cars, in our televisions, even in our toasters and coffeepots. Few jobs have not been impacted by the advances in technology. Community college students expect to see technology put to extensive use in their colleges as well; by and large, colleges have accommodated them. While not every college can boast a computer on every faculty desk, or a campus-wide network or information system, virtually every community college has dozens, if not hundreds, of computers. Computer labs and classrooms are found on almost every campus, and they are increasingly being devoted to teaching subject matter having little to do with programming or computer literacy. A staggering number of educational software titles are available, and hundreds of faculty hours have been devoted to searching through these titles to find the right "fit" for their curricula.

As the technology has advanced, more faculty have been excited by the possibilities. Words and phrases like "interactivity," "multi-media," the "virtual classroom," and "electronic learning communities" have entered the teaching vocabulary. Nationally, evidence suggests that the application of technology to instruction in community colleges is growing rapidly. Faculty development centers, training programs, and instructional computing labs are proliferating.

Unfortunately, in an era of flat or declining overall resources, technology spending comes at the expense of other possible initiatives, and community colleges must ask, "Are we doing the right thing here? Are the dollars we are putting into computers and software making a difference where it counts—with students?" Teachers and program administrators are trying to provide answers to these questions, and they are not easy to answer. Computer-aided instruction (CAI) is complex; many factors impact the learning process and can affect its outcomes.

The Traditional Experimental Model

Despite these complexities, the predominate approach used in most studies of CAI is the classic experimental design that compares a treatment and control group on gain scores or pre/post measures of learning or achievement. Even when sophisticated statistical techniques are used, the results are often inconclusive, hard to interpret, and of little value to decision makers. The problem is that the effect of CAI (or any teaching strategy) is difficult to isolate—and isolating the variable of interest is integral to using an experimental design.

Such isolation is difficult because other variables, which exist in any learning situation, interact with and confound the effect of the teaching strategy. These variables are difficult to control across groups, especially groups large enough to ensure sufficient statistical power. They include, but are not limited to, such diverse factors as the lab aesthetics and environment, the appropriateness of the hardware, the training of the teacher and staff, the involvement of the teacher, quality and content of the orientations, student attendance, the fit between the computer activities and the learning objectives, time on task—the list goes on and on. Reasonable questions a reader might ask of a study concluding that a CAI approach was not significantly different from traditional teaching approaches include: "Is the reason for these findings that the software is not terribly useful or effective? Or is it that student keyboarding skills or insufficient lab time inhibited the class from making use of the full power of the software?" The reality is that, despite the proliferation of computers and computer technology in the worlds of work and commerce, educators are still learning how to effectively apply computer technology to learning. Because the use of technology is still in a formative stage, evaluations of CAI need to address process-oriented, formative concerns—and the traditional experimental pre/post design is not well-suited to that task. The question evaluators should ask is not "Does CAI work?" but "*How* does CAI work?" And that kind of question requires a different approach.

A Different View

Community colleges need evaluation models that will help them understand how to most effectively use CAI by asking the kinds of questions that will illuminate how its use may constrain or augment the myriad of factors affecting the *process* of learning. Evaluation of CAI should involve all of the many stakeholders in its use—faculty, students, and lab staff—in a way that will provide formative insight into how all aspects of technology use can be improved.

The key difference between a broad-scope evaluation and the traditional research model is in the number of questions asked. CAI evaluation should pose many

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questions. Some of these questions may require sophisticated statistics to answer, but many will not. Begin by listing as many of the factors that may influence the effective use of the technology as possible. Then, in everyday English, write a question (or several questions) for each that, when answered, will provide some insight into that particular piece of the puzzle. Once the questions are written, the steps necessary to answer it are often intuitive. Many times a sufficiently detailed and useful answer to a question can be found by simply asking it of the right person. Other times, simple data collection techniques, such as student surveys or automated time-on-task tracking, can be built into the class activities. Typically, some of the most useful information for decision makers will not require sophisticated analysis. Taken as a whole, however, even an informal set of evaluation questions can provide an objective perspective on what is working well and what is not for a particular CAI application. Some samples of possible evaluation questions are listed in the following sections.

Evaluating the Implementation

- Were the training sessions beneficial for faculty? Was there sufficient/too much detail in the orientation?
- Were the teachers given enough preparation to adequately handle computer-related problems?
- Were the computers adequate for the software?
- What kinds of unanticipated problems did the classes encounter that hindered their effectiveness?
- Were the labs located conveniently for students?
- Was there sufficient space around the terminals for students to work efficiently?
- Was the noise level in the labs a problem?
- Were there sufficient terminals/printers for student use?

Evaluating Teaching and Learning

- Could the students and teachers using the software be considered computer literate when they began using the product?
- Did students have a computer at home? Did the faculty?
- Were entry-level computer skills a factor in the time it took a student to begin achieving course objectives?
- What kinds of training did the students require to become self-sufficient on the software? How much time did it take for students to become comfortable with the system?
- Were computer skills a factor in the amount of preparation time required of faculty?
- Did faculty using the lab feel it required more or less preparation time than traditional instructional methods?
- Were some computer-based activities weaker or less appropriate than others?
- Did the computer-aided classes require any special supplemental materials or activities in order to meet the learning objectives of the courses?
- Did student attitudes about the method of instruction, their teacher, or their own preparedness change as a result of using the program?
- How did student performance in classes using the software compare with students taught with traditional methods?
- Do some levels of students benefit more from using the software than others?
- Did the software benefit the students most in need?
- Was computer-aided instruction worthwhile from the student point of view?
- Did study time outside of class appear to increase in classes using the software?
- Were the students in the computer-aided classes comparable to students in traditional classes in terms of entry-level basic skills? In terms of demographic characteristics?
- Was the system reporting and tracking sufficient to meet faculty needs? Student needs?
- Did the teacher interact with students as they used the software? Individually, or with the class as a whole?

A broad-based CAI evaluation of the kind described here implicitly recognizes that CAI is both evolving and complex. The outcomes for students may be impacted by a variety of constraining factors. Often, the simple act of posing questions like these can stimulate insight leading to creative improvements in a CAI application. And, as in many evaluation processes, the answers obtained to some of these questions will raise additional questions.

The continued application of technology to instruction may change in form, even substance, but it is not going to go away. Colleges must embrace technology and make it relevant and useful in teaching. The first step in that process is to begin asking the right questions.

Larry Johnson, *Associate Director, League for Innovation in the Community College*

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Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

September 9, 1994, Vol. XVI, No. 18

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INNOVATION ABSTRACTS is a publication of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD), Department of Educational Administration, College of Education, EDB 348, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, (512) 471-7545. Funding in part by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Sid W. Richardson Foundation. Issued weekly when classes are in session during fall and spring terms. ISSN 0199-106X

VOLUME XVI, NUMBER 19

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (NISOD), COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN • WITH SUPPORT FROM THE W. K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION AND THE SID W. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION

Speaking Collaboratively: A Group Method of Teaching Public Speaking

"I don't remember a thing I said up there. All I kept thinking was, 'Please, God, let this be over soon.'"

Sentiments such as this are common among beginning public speaking students. Research on public speaking tells us that communication apprehension is one of the greatest fears students experience.

The following course design is offered as one strategy for combatting this anxiety. By 1) providing a collaborative, pre-speaking foundation and 2) utilizing the speaking workshop cycles, the design increases student learning and creates a community of speakers who leave the class feeling positive toward public speaking.

The Foundation

Even though we may relate to and understand student speaking apprehension, some methods of teaching beginning public speaking can make the situation worse. Students in public speaking classes are often taught to speak by individually picking a topic, individually preparing and organizing the speech, individually rehearsing the presentation, individually delivering the speech, and finally, collectively receiving criticism. This individual focus on performance and group focus on criticism tends to generate greater uncertainty, apprehension, and fear. No matter how constructive the criticism is in these situations, the average student becomes defensive and withdrawn.

Using groups to facilitate speech organization, preparation, and feedback is invaluable. Group work relieves much of the pre-speech stress and lessens the post-speech defensiveness. The group processes build the support system necessary to help students relax and try. When this collaboration is combined with the front-loading of material, a firm foundation is laid for the first speech.

To explain, prior to their first speaking experience, students participate in intensive pre-speaking workshops that review important communication principles and concepts essential to successful public speaking. Students begin with a positive self-concept workshop, then move to listening, nonverbal communication, group communication, and finally public speaking. They spend time on speech organization, purposes, and delivery. Additionally, all reading and testing are completed before the first speech.

Students also write think pieces, one-to-two page free-writes about an assigned communication topic. They might address self-concept, listening, or nonverbal communication. Before the first speech, students must write a piece that articulates their visualization of their speech. From getting up to sitting down, students describe their ideal first speech (e.g., audience reaction, speaker delivery, and usually the final grade). Each of these pass/fail assignments allows the instructor to provide individual feedback and encouragement to students as they approach the speaking process.

During this early-semester phase, group activities help students collectively learn how to generate attention-getters, phrase transitions, and handle questions. Other group activities include generating message skeletons (outlines) and learning how to message "map." Message "mapping" is a technique for preparing and evaluating speeches that tracks the speech, as the listener hears it, along a graphic "map." The path of the speech is visually displayed along a map of introduction, main idea, and conclusion blocks. In preparing the speech, this technique provides visual learners with a quick reference of the desired speech outcomes. In evaluation, the map provides evaluators with a holistic picture of the speech-listening experience.

In the practice groups, strong speakers and organizers help other less-accomplished students improve their skills. By observing the exercise groups, the instructor is better able to assess student learning and tailor instruction to student needs. In short, these processes help students understand what is expected and reduce the uncertainty surrounding grading criteria. Initially, there is some student resistance; however, by the end of the semester most students comment on how glad they were they went through this process before making the first speech. From this foundation, the students can successfully build their communication skills through the speaking workshops.

The Speaking Workshops

During the speaking workshops phase, the class is either in preparation groups, delivering speeches, or in

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feedback groups. The workshops include the following stages.

- The initial phase involves assigning the speech and forming first-round feedback groups. The students refer to the detailed assignment sheet that outlines the major areas of focus for the first speech (typically an information speech) included in their course packet. Each component area—topic, outline, message management, message substance, and performance skill—is described with detailed expectations and suggestions. Students are told weeks in advance of these processes and advised to pick a topic and begin their research. After reviewing all the criteria, the instructor posts feedback groups (randomly assigned groups of five or six); and the students meet to discuss possible topics, clarify concerns, and start working on outlines.
- Students review each other's topic choices and help build message outlines. Typically, the groups also meet outside of class to further this process. Each group is asked to share one outline, and the class discusses its design.
- Each student delivers a speech to the class while each member of his or her feedback group creates a map of the presentation, recording content and delivery comments. The instructor also "maps" the speech as it is given and makes comments to facilitate grading. After the last speaker, post-speaking feedback groups meet.
- In the post-speech class session, the groups move through a formal feedback group agenda. A group leader is chosen to direct the flow of the exercise as the group gives feedback to each speaker. Group members are urged to be constructive and honest in their feedback. One speaker at a time listens to what the group members believed were the purpose and main ideas. The group also comments on content, organization, and delivery of the speech.

One important aspect of this feedback process is that the speaker is not allowed to "clarify" (i.e., tell members of the audience what they were supposed to hear), only to ask questions about what the group heard—or what was communicated. The speaker listens and records the group's comments. After a person receives an evaluation, he or she collects the "maps" from the other group members, and the group moves on. During this time the instructor works the room, facilitating the discussion in each group. After each student has received group feedback, he/she also receives the instructor's map and evaluation.

- Now each student takes the feedback group outlines and comments, and the instructor evaluation, and writes about the speaking experience. The speaking piece is a free-write aimed at exploring the preparation, delivery, and feedback of a given speaking experience. Students write about the speaking experience and develop specific goals for the next speech. This assignment is turned in during the next class period.
- Students bring a great deal of thought to these papers—setting their own standards and goals for the next speech. An added benefit is that since the inception of this feedback process, there have been few complaints about grades. With the additional group feedback, students see that it was not only the instructor who missed a transition or did not catch a main idea.
- This process is repeated for each speech, with slightly different foci depending on the speech type (e.g., information, persuasion). A new feedback group is assigned for each speech, so students collaborate with all members of the class. (It is recommended that at least two high-ability speakers from the first round are in each feedback group.) The feedback groups become more sophisticated in the process of preparation and feedback, and the think pieces become more detailed. All in all, a collective energy drives each new speaking experience.

Results

The colleagues who have utilized this course design, as well as the students who have participated in it, reinforce the use of the system. The collaborative foundation and speaking workshops facilitate a less intimidating and more encouraging mode of teaching public speaking. The most gratifying outcome is seeing students make friends, learn about communication, and associate positive feelings with an often frightening experience.

Speech teachers have a daunting task—persuading students to approach, learn, and enjoy public speaking. Collaborative methods of teaching might be the key to helping students master public speaking without calling on a "higher power" for a swift ending.

Mark Milliron, *Graduate Student, Community College Leadership Program*

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Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

September 16, 1994, Vol. XVI, No. 19

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INNOVATION ABSTRACTS is a publication of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD), Department of Educational Administration, College of Education, EDB 348, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, (512) 471-7545. Funding in part by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Sid W. Richardson Foundation. Issued weekly when classes are in session during fall and spring terms. ISSN 0199-106X.

VOLUME XVI, NUMBER 20

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (NISOD), COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN • WITH SUPPORT FROM THE W.K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION AND THE SID W. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION

Survival Spanish for Community College Staff or Customer Service for our Spanish-Speaking Callers

The results of a college-wide staff development needs survey indicated a large number of employees wanted Spanish language training. In an ethnically diverse city, instructors and staff frequently interact with callers or visitors who speak very little, if any, English. The College Without Walls (CWW) of the Houston Community College System includes departments that offer English as-a-Second-Language (ESL) courses, refugee placement assistance, driver's education in Spanish, and other community outreach services.

We could have suggested the staff take a conversational Spanish course already offered in the schedule. Our staff development team, however, decided to approach the problem from a new slant. We looked more deeply into this request—who wanted this training and for what purpose? What level of Spanish proficiency were people seeking? How would they use it? Our staff is pressed for time—could they attend a long program? The team discovered that what people really wanted was basic survival Spanish—enough for them to understand and refer those individuals to financial aid, ESL, adult literacy classes, vocational programs, driver's education, etc. Employees had a particular application in mind.

We decided to create a Survival Spanish course for the employees at CWW. Two key groups of volunteers were identified to develop the course: Spanish-speaking employees and employees who receive the first questions. Those who receive the questions became our content experts, and the Spanish-speakers became the translators. We added a team leader who had experience learning an African language in the Peace Corps and a course developer who could pull the pieces together. Our goal was to create a focused, fun, lively, interactive, practical, and results-oriented program.

The team created a four-session course, two hours per session. Handouts were developed for each session to serve as job aids and references. Words were written in Spanish, then written phonetically to aid pronunciation, and then translated into English. The goal was to keep the number of phrases and words to a minimum—to teach only those which were job-related—and to have staff internalize them well enough to be comfortable. The specific telephone numbers and Spanish-speaking persons to ask for in each department were also identified.

- **Session One**: Giving telephone numbers, asking for telephone numbers, asking for the caller's name, taking control of a conversation when the caller begins immediately in Spanish, referring a telephone call, and giving financial aid information.
- **Session Two**: Reinforcing Session One, providing information on English-as-a-Second Language classes and adult literacy classes.
- **Session Three**: Reinforcing Session Two, plus information on Driver's Education classes conducted in Spanish.
- **Session Four**: Reinforcing Session Three, plus information on giving directions and building locations.

Experienced Spanish-language instructors and volunteers served as the course instructors. One instructor brought in a toy telephone and had students practice. Students role-played among themselves and played games to learn the numbers and phrases. The goal was to teach phrases, key words, pronunciation, numbers, and directions in Spanish, with enough understanding to be able to identify the main need of each caller or visitor, and direct him/her to the department that could provide further help.

A total of 20 people completed the pilot program—including secretaries, clerks, librarians, instructors, registration technicians, administrators, and receptionists. The course was a resounding success. Participants were amazed they could learn Spanish in such a short time. The best part of the program is that we can now better serve our Spanish-speaking students and callers. And because it was a short, painless process, employees are begging for more.

Connie Stone, *Chair, Staff Development Team*

For further information, contact the author at College Without Walls/Houston Community College System, 4310 Dunlavy, Room 231, Houston, TX 77006.

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Teaching Students How to Achieve College Excellence

Involving Students in Mathematics

Del Mar College offers ACE 1010, Achieving College Excellence, a study skills course which teaches the behaviors of successful students. One behavior which is emphasized throughout the course is active class participation. The group activities meet the needs of students with a wider range of learning styles than does lecture only. Students who teach others also learn. As a former high school math instructor who relied heavily on the lecture format, I was skeptical at first of how effective such an interactive approach would be. However, I was so impressed by the effectiveness of these techniques that I was determined to use them in the math classes I teach part-time at another college.

As a math instructor, I have been frustrated by students who needed to learn information they had never mastered. I was hopeful that the student-centered approach in my study skills class could be used to help students master essential background math skills by actively involving them in their own learning. Two techniques I have used to improve students' basic skills encourage them to ask thoughtful questions and use study groups.

Encouraging Thoughtful Questions

Students are more likely to meet our expectations when we model the behavior we want them to demonstrate. To encourage students to ask thoughtful questions, we should give them examples to follow. Before class, write three or four questions about that day's lesson on separate index cards. Write questions representative of the types you wish your students would ask, including questions demonstrating higher-order thinking skills. As students enter the classroom, give the cards to different students, at least one of whom seemed inattentive at previous class meetings. Students who receive cards are to watch for the appropriate time in class to raise their hands and ask their questions.

After this exercise, my students are not only more likely to ask questions, they are more discerning about the quality of questions asked, taking care to phrase questions precisely and to ask questions about relationships and applications.

Using Study Groups

The exercise which effectively models how a study group can be used to increase mathematical understanding is described here. Divide the class into groups of four or five students. Give each group an index card containing a review topic, such as adding fractions, comparing decimals, or factoring quadratic trinomials. Each group is to write a step-by-step description of how to work that type of problem, assuming that the reader of their description will possess some background knowledge. The index cards are then rotated one group clockwise. Each group now writes a simple question for the topic, comparable to a B-level, medium-difficulty homework problem. The description and sample question are given to a third group, whose task it is to solve the problem exactly following the description. The problem and solution are returned to the original group, who must determine whether the problem has been answered correctly.

This exercise can be varied. Select the sample questions and write them on the back of the card for another to work. Have a different group check the problem, rather than the original group. Prepare a double set of cards; after students have written their instructions for solving the problem, combine the two matching groups to compare their descriptions.

This activity takes (for large classes) slightly more time than a traditional lecture but is much more effective. My students have continued to meet outside of class. Emphasis is placed on communicating a procedure, not just producing a result. Students have commented that until now they had not appreciated the importance of using precise vocabulary.

By modeling thoughtful questions and effective study group practices, we can help our students become more active learners.

Pam Pudelka, *Interim Coordinator of Advising*

For further information, contact the author at Del Mar College, Office of Advising, East Campus, Corpus Christi, TX 78404-3897.

Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

September 23, 1994, Vol. XVI, No. 20

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INNOVATION ABSTRACTS is a publication of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD), Department of Educational Administration, College of Education, EDB 348, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, (512) 471-7545. Funding in part by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Sid W. Richardson Foundation. Issued weekly when classes are in session during fall and spring terms. ISSN 0199-106X.

VOLUME XVI, NUMBER 21

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (NISOD), COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN • WITH SUPPORT FROM THE W. K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION AND THE SID W. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION

Creative Writing in the History Classroom

Research indicates that students sharpen their critical thinking skills through writing, and "writing across the curriculum" has been a high priority at Midlands Technical College. For the 1992 fall semester, I designed a writing component for History 110, our one-semester United States history survey course.

In this course I combined the study of history with the requirement for each student to create a fictional family and then develop the memorabilia from which an American saga might be written about that family. The idea was for each student to introduce a newcomer—European or African—into the American colonies and build a family story around that person's descendants through history to the present time. The students were instructed to connect the fictional family to their own grandparents so that the span of history would be more meaningful. The story would be pieced together through "primary sources"—the documents left by that family and "discovered" by the students. Students also had to base two of their entries on genuine historical documents which they located in libraries, county courthouses, local or state archives, or other repositories of records. With this requirement, the students were introduced to research in original sources.

Each class began with a short quiz to encourage regular study habits, and then the class discussed the reading assignment in the textbook. From time to time, students would share ideas about how they were going to place their families in the particular period being studied. Essay examinations were administered at midterm and at the end of the semester to grade the students on historical knowledge and understanding.

For the second part of the class, the students worked in the Writing Center to create the family papers. Combining knowledge of history with imagination, the students drafted letters, wrote entries in personal journals, dictated wills, and composed newspaper clippings or other documents to show how American families might have been affected by events they witnessed. At the end of each class, students printed a copy of the day's work for me. I marked these papers to indicate errors in grammar and to make suggestions for improvement in style and historical accuracy. (Having access to the word processors made it easy for them to make changes.) The students also served as editors of their work, writing brief introductions for each document to explain how it formed a part of the family story. In addition, each wrote a general introduction and conclusion to the saga. Through these exercises, students gained a deeper understanding of the impact of history on the lives of ordinary citizens.

As the semester progressed, the students became more knowledgeable and confident, and their work improved in quantity and quality. At first, most students composed one-half to two-thirds of a page for a document. Later, most were writing two and sometimes three pages for each entry, and they were very willing to make the revisions I suggested. (One student's portfolio reached 75 pages of revised composition.) I graded the body of work at the end of the semester, taking into account whether all 23 assignments were completed, how well revisions had been made, the depth of historical perspective as well as creativity and good writing. A significant sign of the quality of the students' work was the decision of the editors of *Stylus*, the college's literary magazine, to include selections for publication in the spring issue. Students whose works were published were pleased with this recognition.

According to the students' evaluations of the course, they liked approaching history in this new way. More than 85 percent said that writing about history on a regular basis deepened their understanding of historical developments; that writing about historical events in a personal way made these events more meaningful; and that dealing with history in a creative way brought about a greater appreciation for it. Ninety-two percent said that their thinking skills had been challenged by integrating historical material into a personalized narrative. One hundred percent said that the course was intellectually stimulating. From my perspective, too, the course was successful; however, it required a great deal of time.

For the next semester, I assigned handwritten letterbooks (one-subject notebooks) to the students in one of my sections of Western Civilization II. After each class, the students composed letters which delved

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into one of the events or issues which we discussed in class. The author and recipient of each letter had to be identified (e.g., from Pierre, a participant in the storming of the Bastille, to his pregnant wife, Jeanne, telling of his hopes for the future of France) which required the students to consider these events and issues in very personal terms. I quickly checked four of the letterbooks at each class, just to encourage the students to keep them up-to-date. On three occasions I collected the letterbooks and made suggestions for improvements, along with remarks of encouragement. At the end of the term, I assigned grades to the letterbooks, which constituted 16 percent of the semester grade. I also designed an evaluation instrument to determine the students' responses to the course generally and to the writing component specifically. They were very positive.

The letterbook is a good compromise for a writing assignment in courses which do not concentrate on composition. This technique encourages students to write on a regular basis without creating a major grading burden for the instructor. It requires that students think about issues the instructor is addressing. Finally, it moves the instructional material into a more personal realm for the students. Can it be adapted for a mathematics course? Have students write to friends and pose a word problem devised by the student, applying the mathematical principles being studied. Give extra credit for a response which shows how the solution was reached. Sociology? Have students write to an imaginary pen pal in a foreign country to explain sociological developments in the United States. To add a multicultural dimension, have students research conditions in a foreign country and write letters from that perspective, applying the sociological lessons learned in the classroom to a different society.

Be creative with assignments. Be patient with students. You should be surprised and rewarded with the results!

Dixon K. Durham, *Instructor, History*

For further information, contact the author at Midlands Technical College, P. O. Box 2408, Columbia, SC 29202.

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- **Country/Western Line Dancing Lessons**—William McPherson, *Chattanooga State Technical Community College*
- **Faculty Evaluation: Characteristics of Effective and Defensible Plans**—James Hammons, *University of Arkansas*
- **How the 500-Channel Universe Will Change the Way We Teach**—Larry Johnson, *League for Innovation in the Community College*
- **What's Hot (and What's Not) in Faculty Development**—Mike McHargue, *Foothill College*
- **The Student At-Risk in the Community College**—William Moore, Jr., *The University of Texas at Austin*
- **A Vision for the Twenty-First Century**—Donald G. Phelps, *The University of Texas at Austin*
- **Improving Student Motivation**—John E. Roueche, *The University of Texas at Austin*
- **Making Access and Curriculum Reform Compatible Goals: A Faculty Perspective**—Uri Treisman, *The University of Texas at Austin*
- **Strategic Learning/Strategic Teaching: A Model for the Twenty-First Century**—Claire Weinstein, *The University of Texas at Austin*

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

- Monday, May 22, 8:30-9:45 a.m.
  Juliet Garcia, President, The University of Texas at Brownsville
- Tuesday, May 23, 8:30-9:15 a.m.
  George Boggs, President, Palomar College, and Immediate Past Chair, AACC

For more information, *call 512/471-7545.*

Suanne D. Roueche, Editor
September 30, 1994, Vol. XVI, No. 21
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INNOVATION ABSTRACTS is a publication of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD), Department of Educational Administration, College of Education, EDB 348, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, (512) 471-7545. Funding in part by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Sid W. Richardson Foundation. Issued weekly when classes are in session during fall and spring terms. ISSN 0199-106X.

VOLUME XVI, NUMBER 22

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (NISOD), COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN • WITH SUPPORT FROM THE W. K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION AND THE SID W. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION

Engineering Openings—Women Wanted

During the first week of classes in 1985, when I started teaching at Ohlone College, two young women from my graphics class came to my office and said they wanted to take my statics class, but they did not have the prerequisite. "Oh," I said, "What's your grade point average?" "Four O," they said. "You've got all A's, both of you?" I countered in wonder. "Yes," they said. "Well, go look at the textbook and if it looks okay to you, I'll see you Thursday," I replied.

The next time I saw them was in graphics class, not the statics class. They told me, "We looked at the book and decided we don't have the time to do all the problems." "There are 100 problems at the end of every chapter, and I only assign about 10 a week," I replied. They were adamant: "We don't care what is assigned; we do all the problems at the end of the chapters." Looking back, this was the beginning of my involvement with women in engineering. They left in the spring with 55 semester units and graduated two years later from the Electrical Engineering and Computer Science departments of the University of California, Berkeley.

I began to notice that my female students seemed to ask different types of questions than men asked; they were not as concerned about revealing what they did not know. They wanted to get everything right. There was usually only one woman in every class, rarely two. Since the female engineering students I knew were so good, it seemed odd there were so few. I read what I could find about women in or out of engineering and decided they needed a club to facilitate *networking*—a word that came up repeatedly in articles about women in engineering.

Feeling certain that the club would be more successful if started by the students, I circulated a flier in the engineering and math classes, suggesting the advantages of networking. In a few days a young woman knocked at my door and said, "We need a club." Her name was Wendy Chan, and she became the first "Chief Engineer" of the Ohlone Women Engineers club, OWE. I became the advisor. I recruited a female math teacher to be co-advisor since we had no female engineering teachers.

Inviting women engineers to campus to speak was the OWE's initial activity. I gave extra credit to all who attended from my classes. These speakers proved to be popular and gave me the idea to use women engineers as guest speakers in my Introduction to Engineering course.

The club took advantage of the outreach offer by the SWE, the Society for Women Engineers student chapter at the University of California, Berkeley, to send some members to Ohlone to explain how to get into the university and how to stay in. We asked for female community college transfer students so that our students could imagine themselves making such a transfer. Akiko Inoue, a transfer from Ohlone who was a former chief engineer of our club, our outstanding engineer in 1993, and a winner of a $1,000 SWE, Santa Clara chapter, scholarship, returned last year to tell about her experiences. This presentation was well-attended. I admit to feeling proud.

The club arranged for industrial field trips to IBM, Logitech, and Silicon Graphics. We made certain in advance that we would see and could talk to women engineers. I now use the same approach for my "Intro" class field trips.

In the late spring, OWE sponsors the Engineers Feast, a potluck dinner designed to celebrate the successful transfer of our engineering students to various four-year schools. In the past three years we have had 21, 29, and 27 students transferring; and of those 9, 5, and 5 repectively, were women. These are minimum numbers as there is no formal tracking of transfers. This feast features a successful practicing woman engineer as the main speaker. Awards are given for the traditional "Most Likely to Succeed" and the not-so-traditional "Most Helpful to Other Students."

I discovered that Purdue had more women engineers than any other university, and one of the female professors encouraged me to copy their Women in Engineering course, which she felt was helpful in retaining women students. It was easy to find a super female engineer who was eager to teach the course.

Each semester the Women In Engineering Seminar must recruit students to avoid being cancelled. I am convinced that contact with women engineers and networking are the two most important means of recruiting and retaining women engineering students. This course provides ample opportunity for both. However, even beginning engineering students are not inclined to take courses that are not required. Putting up posters

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and mailing fliers were not successful, so I began looking for a new way of bringing the course to the attention of the women students (who are more than 50 percent of all students). I was aware of our own Women In Literature class and our Women's Health class, so I initiated a Women Studies Program that included our course. Now students register for our Women In Engineering Seminar class in the Women Studies Program.

One day when I was discussing recruiting and retaining women engineering students with a local high school vice principal, I learned that her daughter was studying engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). This young woman had reported to her mother that even the rooms at MIT reeked of masculinity. I decided to make a tour of our classrooms. I found our engineering rooms undecorated, relatively joyless and stark, in contrast to the considerably more interesting rooms that women teachers call their own. By putting up calendars and posters and strategically placing a few plants, the rooms look more colorful, cheerful, and diverse.

In the spring of 1993, I acted on an idea that had been simmering for some time. I formed an Advisory Committee for Women in Engineering: nine engineers, a mathematician, our public relations head, and a high school counselor, all women, and myself. They are anxious to help provide more women an opportunity in engineering. Each of our women engineering students has had a telephone call from one of these women engineers who are available to students to answer questions and provide general support.

The co-advisor of the club organized a reception for our new female engineering students so they could meet the women on the committee and other women engineering students in the college. At this reception, our seminar teacher awarded an Engineering Scholarship and a Women's Engineering Scholarship, $250 awards which she personally funded. One committee member is exploring the possibility of generating additional scholarship money from her company. A math teacher at the college has donated $500 to the Ohlone Women Engineers Scholarship Fund.

Since I have become more involved with retaining and recruiting female students, I have increased my criteria for textbook review. I look to see how many women are in the illustrations and what they are doing. I check the text to see how or if the question of why there are so few women in engineering is addressed. Additionally, when I lecture, I make sure I use both genders of pronouns and that problems are written using both genders. I am careful to know the names of my women students, and I call on them in class. When I see articles about successful women engineers, such as Sheila Widnall, the Secretary of the Air Force, I post them on bulletin boards or circulate them. I joined SWE and WEPAN, Women In Engineering Program Advocates Network, so that I would not miss any new ideas. To facilitate networking, I started a Who's Who In Engineering, class photos, and a student phone list.

I believe the student population of women engineers has leveled out at about 15 percent because we are not recruiting the women who would rank in the second, third, and fourth quartile of engineers. The women students near the top of their class in science and math are being counseled to go into engineering, but those who rank lower are more likely to be channeled toward nursing or teaching. The community college provides a natural route for these lower-ranked students to go into engineering. At Ohlone we have several math courses below calculus and an assessment test to place students for success. We have a math lab that is open all day and at night, started on a volunteer basis several years ago by the OWE co-advisor, but now staffed by one teacher and an assistant. A female math teacher conducts testing and math anxiety classes.

Where do we go from here? We have begun a program in which every female engineering student has the opportunity to have a practicing female engineer for a mentor in the discipline of her choice. We plan to have a brochure to explain to those young and not-so-young women, who are potential engineers, that Ohlone has the welcome mat out for them. We have developed a good model for retention and hope that by enabling our women students to succeed, others will be convinced that they too can become engineers. Community college is the right place for some of them to start.

James L. Eagan, *Professor, Engineering*

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Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

October 7 1994, Vol. XVI, No. 22

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INNOVATION ABSTRACTS is a publication of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD), Department of Educational Administration, College of Education, EDB 348, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, (512) 471-7545. Funding in part by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Sid W. Richardson Foundation. Issued weekly when classes are in session during fall and spring terms. ISSN 0199-106X.

VOLUME XVI, NUMBER 23

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (NISOD), COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN • WITH SUPPORT FROM THE W. K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION AND THE SID W. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION

The 12 Ball Problem, or How I Stopped Hating the Assignment and Learned to Love Thinking

Years ago, in an undergraduate cognitive processes class, an instructor told us about an "unsolvable" problem: There are 12 balls, identical in appearance, but one is either heavier or lighter than the others. Using only a balance scale, and using it only three times, isolate the odd ball and be able to say in which way it differs.

I took the unsolvable problem home to my chemistry major husband. He solved it. When I showed the solution to the instructor, he said he had never considered that strategy. For years, I used that example to demonstrate obstacles to problem solving.

Just recently, I decided to use the 12 Ball Problem in a different way. I assigned the problem to my introductory psychology students. They were required to solve the problem and to submit not only the solution, but a record of their work. They were to explain the problem-solving techniques they used, describe obstacles they encountered, and show they understood the terminology. This project would constitute one-third of their grade. [As a framework, I used the four stages of problem solving described by Lester A. Lofton in his introductory text, *Psychology*.]

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Realizing that a problem exists

A number of students quickly dismissed the assignment as "a piece of cake." One student said to me later, "I thought you were crazy to give us such an easy assignment for such a big portion of our grade."

I cautioned students to try to solve the problem immediately. I knew many would procrastinate, thinking the project would take them very little time.

Students even came up after class the first day, telling me they thought they had the solution already. After a couple of questions, they could see they did not. Only then did they begin to look at the assignment as "real."

Assessing the complexity

A couple of weeks after the assignment had been given, there were the beginnings of understanding. "This is harder than I thought it would be" and "I can see this is going to require some effort" were frequently heard comments. About halfway through the term, one student grumbled that I had ruined every weekend because he could not think of anything but how to solve the problem.

A common mistake was made by a number of students who confidently offered solutions early in the term. They said it had been fairly easy to isolate the odd ball; they just could not decide if it was heavier or lighter. They were surprised when I told them their solution did not meet the requirements. Half-done was not acceptable.

Devising ways of solving the problem

One student correctly identified a very important goal of the problem-solving strategy. "The real challenge was learning how to eliminate some of the uniform balls at each weighing. That is why weighing six and six the first time would not work. You still don't know which ones are not the odd ball."

Some students tried to develop algorithms. But most plodded methodically through, using trial and error. While most of the problem solvers started at the front, some of them started at the back. "I could see the only way to get the answer was to eliminate all but three balls by the third weighing," one student wrote. "So then I set about figuring out how to get to that point in the first two steps."

Some students came upon the answer through insight. "The answer came to me while I was eating M&M's," one student reported. She then went on to explain how using the colors of the M&M's allowed her to keep track of what she knew about the balls. Another said, "I literally stumbled onto the answer." He went on to describe how he was using pennies and had them lined up on the floor when he accidentally kicked one group as he was trying a mock attempt to weigh the balls. The resulting chaos suddenly presented a novel arrangement which he found led to the solution. Another had been working on the problem before retiring for the night and dreamed about balls falling off

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the scale, which led to his solution.

Many students correctly identified problem-solving obstacles. "It took me a long time to get past thinking that the only time I learned anything about a ball was when it was on the scale. Since we had to weigh them, I fixated on the scale as providing the only useful information. But we actually learn something about every ball, on or off the scale, every time we weigh any of the balls."

Students were not allowed to talk about the problem among themselves during the term, but once the projects were in, there was a lot of discussion. Many students found it was easier to identify obstacles others had met than to see their own.

Assessing whether or not we have been successful

Many students who were sure they had the solution still had difficulty working through all the possible results of weighing the 12 balls. More than once, while trying to explain their solution, they recognized they had actually met a dead end which forced them to go back and redo the work. Even when they had the answer, they had to struggle to explain how they knew they were right. Reports ranged from a one-page color diagram to a seven-page distillation of one student's ideas and attempts to solve the problem. "I knew I had done it, but explaining how I did it almost killed me," this student wrote.

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Did the students learn anything about how their thought processes worked? Two students, with very disciplined math backgrounds, evidently had to do little work and had not felt a stretch of their abilities. One man with a degree in physics was taking the psychology course for enrichment. He seemed puzzled by this aspect of the assignment. "I do things like this in my work all day so it was very easy." Then he asked, "That won't affect my grade, will it?"

But the experience was enlightening for many others. Many students admitted to a grudging gratitude for the assignment. "I can't say I enjoyed doing that problem, but it made me use brain cells I didn't know I had," one student told me. I also heard expressions such as "nightmare," "industrial-strength headache," and "haunting."

A returning student said, "I think the most important thing I learned was not which ball was heavier or lighter, but that I could really do it. About half-way through I was going to quit and do another project. But then I said to myself, 'You can't give up on this.' And I didn't. I gained a lot of confidence in myself."

One student said that as he was forced to examine his thinking processes he could see a problem that affected many areas of functioning. He noted that he often clung to unworkable methods. "Even when I knew I couldn't get to the solution by weighing six against six, I couldn't let it go. That happens to me a lot, not just on the 12 Ball Problem."

I will use this assignment again. This first time, not confident of the ability of all my students to successfully solve the problem, I gave them two other options by which to earn the same number of points. Some students did not even try to solve the 12 Ball Problem. Next time, they will all get to share the growth experience!

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October 14, 1994, Vol. XVI, No. 23

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INNOVATION ABSTRACTS is a publication of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD), Department of Educational Administration, College of Education, EDB 348, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, (512) 471-7545. Funding in part by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Sid W. Richardson Foundation. Issued weekly when classes are in session during fall and spring terms. ISSN 0199-106X.

VOLUME XVI, NUMBER 24

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (NISOD), COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN • WITH SUPPORT FROM THE W. K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION AND THE SID W. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION

Want to Cut Up Something Different in Biology? Try a Journal Article Dissection

One challenge in teaching introductory biology courses is making it clear to students that science is not just a staid old body of knowledge, but rather a process, a means of acquiring and adding to our body of knowledge. Most current introductory textbooks include at least a short discussion of "the scientific method" in Chapter 1, and most instructors lecture on the subject. However, without an abundance of examples in the text and in class, students acquire little real understanding of the process of scientific inquiry.

Laboratory exercises are one option for developing this understanding, as they can be conducted along the lines of scientific inquiry. Students may even be asked to write their laboratory findings in a short mock-up of a manuscript to be submitted for publication in a scientific journal. Here I describe an alternative approach, which involves analysis of the scientific methodology of published journal articles.

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In teaching the scientific method, it is standard procedure to label a series of steps that scientists follow. Various authors and instructors may differ with regard to how many steps they use. However, we all recognize essentially the same process, the process ingrained in practicing researchers. Fragmentation of the process into a series of steps also dovetails nicely with the standard format used for publication in biological journals.

For the past four years, students in the first semester of a majors-level Principles of Biology sequence have been assigned "dissections" of short journal articles. As I present the steps of the scientific method, students find and discuss examples from their articles. This class meets for three lecture hours and four laboratory hours each week for two semesters, allowing plenty of time to examine various nuances of scientific methodology and considering a variety of examples. In the first part of the fall semester, I devote one-and-one-half weeks of lecture to scientific methodology, including a lecture on the basic principles of statistical inference. Two-and-one-half weeks of laboratory time are spent working with examples, including conducting simple statistical tests. The students are then ready to complete a series of four journal article dissections over the remainder of the fall semester. Each assigned article is read for clarification during the latter half of a laboratory session, and students then have two weeks to submit written dissections. Students may work singly, or may collaborate with a partner. The top three grades constitute approximately 20 percent of both the lecture and laboratory course grades.

I recognize the following steps:

- Background information—usually composed largely or wholly of literature citations
- Objective—alternatively called a question and an hypothesis
- Test of hypothesis—may or may not be a controlled experiment
- Null hypothesis—to which statistical analyses are usually applied
- Results—a.k.a. data
- Level 1 conclusions—determining the validity of each null hypothesis
- Level 2 conclusions—deciding whether or not these results and analyses are consistent with the hypothesis being tested
- Publication

These steps can be recovered from the sections of a standard journal article as follows: The **Abstract**, of course, summarizes everything from background information to Level 2 conclusions; the **Introduction** begins with a discussion of the background information (although frequently some background information is not discussed until later), and ends with a statement of the objective; the **Materials and Methods** section includes a description of the test of hypothesis and sometimes states the null hypotheses; the **Results** section includes data together with the results of the tests of the null hypotheses, or Level 1 conclusions; and the **Discussion** section is organized around the Level 2 conclusions. Thus, the challenge for students is to know where to look to find these steps in the work they are dissecting and recognize the steps when they find them.

Locating the steps is only one part of dissecting an article, however. Students also are asked to use the objective to explicitly state the question and hypothesis of the research; to identify independent and dependent variables, and, if applicable, control variables and experimental and control groups or treatments; to formally state each null hypothesis and interpret, with statistical confidence levels, each null hypothesis test; and to identify in the discussion section any new hypotheses offered which might be tested in the future. Finally, I ask

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that students end their written dissections with a critical appraisal of the work they have dissected. Four rounds of this and they are ready to write their own manuscripts, using simple scenarios and small data sets.

I follow four major guidelines when choosing the articles that will be dissected each year. First, for freshmen who generally are getting their first real exposure to actual research, succinct articles of two to five printed pages in length are my preference, as are articles addressing a single hypothesis. (However, an article addressing two or more hypotheses simultaneously may be used for a later assignment.) I look in the Notes or Short Communications sections of journals for articles of appropriate length. Second, as a field biologist not prone to manipulating conditions experimentally, I have no qualms about using articles based on similar such field work, but these articles do lack the opportunity to consider control variables and the difference between experimental and control groups; at the very least a mix of articles should be used. Third, students who have not yet taken an introductory statistics class may be taught to understand the general idea of *t*-tests, analyses of variance (ANOVAs), χ^2-tests, and simple linear regression, but even many brief articles use more sophisticated statistical analyses that can overwhelm the students and should be avoided. Finally, the research subject matter must be comprehensible to the average freshman student. I find that simple behavioral and ecological papers work very well for the first assignments, while more latitude in subject matter develops as the semester progresses and more course material is covered.

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This is scarcely the type of dissection freshman biology majors expect to do. The results, however, are a dramatically increased understanding of scientific methodology, developed well beyond that achieved by the old "read-Chapter-1-and-take-good-lecture-notes" approach. Although the work required to complete four consecutive assignments is substantial, students always have seemed to realize the practical value to them in their professions. One student recently admitted to medical school told me that the experience of dissecting journal articles was valuable preparation for his entrance exams. And, since biology majors can expect to be very involved with journal articles, if not as authors then at least as readers, we might as well ask our freshmen to roll up their sleeves and dig in.

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Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

October 21, 1994, Vol. XVI, No. 24

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INNOVATION ABSTRACTS is a publication of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD), Department of Educational Administration, College of Education, EDB 348, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, (512) 471-7545. Funding in part by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Sid W. Richardson Foundation. Issued weekly when classes are in session during fall and spring terms. ISSN 0199-106X.

VOLUME XVI, NUMBER 25

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (NISOD), COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN • WITH SUPPORT FROM THE W. K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION AND THE SID W. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION

Getting to Know Your Students: The "Success Speech"

Each semester my speech and communication class fills with students, apprehensive and insecure about the process of public speaking. Usually 70-80 percent never have taken a speech class and do not remember giving a report or speech in the last four years.

The ice-breaker speech can be deadly to those students. I have tried the standard "getting to know you" speech and found my students telling the same old story. They give little thought to the information about themselves; they fill the allotted time with their years in town, marital status, children, hobbies, and so on. The speakers were not particularly motivated, and the listeners became restless after a few speeches. All that initial speech seemed to accomplish was lowering further the student's self-perception of his/her speaking ability. Then I tried the "success speech."

Now after the introductory class session, I ask the students to bring in a symbol of a success in their lives and tell about it for approximately five minutes. I explain that the speech is not given a grade, nor is it critiqued. It simply will be a time of listening and enjoying. The students may talk of successes as early in life as they wish. I assure them it will not be a contest, just a sharing of something important in their lives; and I give them examples of other success speeches from the past.

In past speeches, classes have seen baseball gloves and heard stories of students' dreams coming true; a black belt and the journey getting there; pictures of children and spouses; cheerleading jackets; trophies; a sample of wall paper; report cards, high school diplomas; letters of appreciation; and letters of acceptance to college.

This assignment has become my favorite. We, as a class, are immediately touched by some of the obstacles that students have overcome in their lives. One student shared that his greatest success was graduating from high school. He realized that some people may not view that as much of a success, but as the first member of a large family to ever make it through high school, he recalled with pride the tears of his mother, father, and siblings as he walked up on stage to receive his diploma.

One of my students told of his past history as a gang member. He talked of a teacher that pulled him aside and told him he was destined to be somebody. His teacher's words had stuck; he left the gang, with great difficulty, along with the alcohol, the drugs, and the crime. He was working hard to make this teacher's words come true.

One semester I had a basketball player in my class. He was about 6'10" tall. His name and picture appeared nearly every week in the sports section of the local newspaper. After the initial class meeting I viewed him as being rather cocky and a tad abrasive. I expected him to bring a trophy for his success speech. Instead, this young man stood before us telling about the greatest success in his life. He pulled out a wallet-sized photo of his mother and began to share with us her constant reassurances and prayers that her son would one day escape from the ghetto. After all, she reminded him, he was special; and she promised him he would succeed. He said all his publicity, his trophies, and the attention he received should go to his mother, for she had made it happen.

Many of my students remarked that the assignment was difficult but meaningful. They had to dig deep and ponder successes in their lives. One woman, named Rose, called to tell me she would be unable to give the speech. She explained, "I am not able to do the assignment. I have had no successes." I quickly reassured her and began giving her suggestions. "Have you been married?" I asked. "Yes," she replied, and that was definitely not a success. "Children?" I quickly responded. Again she replied, "Yes, but they were not a success." After several other questions, and still no successes, I suggested she talk to a friend and ask him/her to help her determine one of her successes.

The following week I immediately looked to see if her seat was empty. Fortunately, it was not. After all of the other speeches were completed, this woman quietly shared with the class that she had phoned and told me she could not give the speech. But, she said as she listened to the others talking about their successes, she realized that perhaps she had underestimated her accomplishments. She went on to tell us that as a high school dropout and a divorced mother with four children, she managed to find two low-paying jobs to support her family. She had just put a down payment on her first home. At 40 years of age, she had received her GED and was now beginning college. The students responded with thunderous applause. Their support continued for

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the entire semester, as they sensed her need to be praised.

We give our students few opportunities to talk about the successes in their lives, and often in the college setting, we give students the perception that no one really cares. It amazes me that we can spend an entire semester together and never know that someone sitting next to us is vying for Miss Yuma County, has a black belt in karate, was valedictorian of his high school graduating class, was a past drug addict and overcame it, was spelling bee champion in 1992, or won first place in the state art contest.

After the assignment, we discuss that most successes in our lives have not come easy, but rather that they are obstacles we have had to overcome. We ponder the fact that true success is not handed to us, but comes from working hard.

I recommend the "success speech" to any class. Not only does it give the students a quick boost of self-esteem, support from the other students, and practice speaking in front of a group, but it gets them focusing on success.

Karen Spencer, *Instructor, Speech*

For further information, contact the author at Arizona Western College, 2297 East 25th Place, Yuma, AZ 85365.

Encouraging Students to Start Their Personal Academic Libraries

Almost every student who comes into my office comments on the number of books on my shelves. "Are they all yours?" "Have you read them all?" I explain that this is my personal academic library, that some books are 30 years old or older, and that most are used as reference books, saving a number of trips to the library.

To begin my own academic library, I kept all books from my undergraduate and graduate science courses and books I purchased from other students. In my first college teaching position, other teachers and textbook representatives gave me books. In my current position, I exchange with other science teachers.

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During the second semester of the academic year, I ask all natural science majors enrolled in my lecture and/or lab to drop by the office. I begin our visit by telling them that I hope they plan to keep their science books when they finish their current courses and use them as references in others. Then I give them a text from the shelf to be used for starting their own academic library. The book is usually a second edition of a book that has gone to a third edition, and I try to match the book to the specific field of study each student wishes to pursue.

I have been giving books to natural science majors for three years. Only two of the approximately 25 students had already started a collection of science books. Smiles on faces were nice to see. Most students were a little shocked, but they all were thankful. In the second year, I received a letter from a former student who was taking a junior-level science course at another school. The course did not have a textbook, but he was using the one I had given him to help in the transition and wanted me to know it had been a great help to him.

Encouraging students to keep their textbooks and giving them another should help get them started with their personal academic library. The students will appreciate your encouragement.

Lloyd L. Willis, *Associate Professor, Biology*

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Susanne D. Roueche, Editor

October 28, 1994, Vol. XVI, No. 25
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INNOVATION ABSTRACTS is a publication of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD), Department of Educational Administration, College of Education, EDB 348, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, (512) 471-7545. Funding in part by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Sid W. Richardson Foundation. Issued weekly when classes are in session during fall and spring terms. ISSN 0199-106X.

VOLUME XVI, NUMBER 26

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (NISOD), COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN • WITH SUPPORT FROM THE W. K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION AND THE SID W. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION

The "Three Language" Class

Your mission: Teach a bilingual computer class of mostly Spanish students with limited English-speaking skills. The lecture shall be primarily in English, and you will offer individual help with translation to Spanish when necessary.

Textbook: The same text used for the regular class.

Length: The same as other credit classes.

Handouts and lab assignments: Whatever you wish.

The introductory computer course at Mattatuck Community College includes hands-on instruction on the IBM disk operation system, word processing, spreadsheets, database, and as many general computer principles as possible in order to give students a comprehensive background. It includes one lab assignment per week, several written tests, several laboratory hands-on tests, extra projects, etc. When another experimental class was opened, to be taught in a bilingual mode, I was concerned! This approach would require, in a manner of speaking, using three languages.

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Pedagogical Concerns

This class was not remedial, and the content was to be the same as that in the regular computer class. This was achieved by using additional one-on-one help, extra handouts to clarify material, two bilingual tutors, translations of the hands-on computer lab tests, and oral translations of the written tests.

Technical terms were translated into the students' native language; however, they remained English language terms, and explanations for the terms were made in English.

Methods and Procedures

I modified some methods and procedures to accommodate the students:

- Class was held in a small room which had an ample supply of computers, one per student plus spares. This proved essential because it turned the lecture into a hands-on session.
- I used a projection unit connected to my computer so students could see what I was doing in my demonstrations. This was not unusual in a computer class, but it was *essential* in this class.
- Some students, seizing the opportunity to use the computer in front of them, took class notes using the word processing package we were learning and printed the notes at the end of class.
- The lectures and presentations were made in English with immediate Spanish translations. This, of course, was for the benefit of students whose English was poor. However, I found that the slower pace and the reinforcement that the repetition provided helped learners who were fluent in English.
- I constantly evaluated the potential reasons for any deficiencies, to determine whether they were due to language deficiency, lack of previous academic preparation (such as poor reading comprehension), or lack of class preparation. Soon, this mental evaluation became second nature.

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Observations

I can make some interesting and significant observations from having taught this course.

- Tenacity: Advance warnings—even repetitious at times—were provided about the deadline for student withdrawal, including a handout to each student with grades and averages to date. Yet, even those students who were in danger of failing did not drop the course.
- Social aspects: Many of these students knew each other before the class; some were from the same neighborhood. This proved to have positive and negative effects, since some students helped each other outside of class and others had personal problems with class members. Even though the students felt supported by college staff, personal comments and class questionnaires told us that they felt more comfortable with peer help.
- Academic preparation: Some students were academically deficient in their native language. This deficiency should be a major consideration during the placement or advising process, since an academically deficient student who also has a language problem requires extra attention and resources, as was evident

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in the quality of questions and necessary amount of repetition.

- Teacher communication: I had to be careful not to take some things for granted. For example, the correct spelling of commonly used words in the Spell Check word-processing feature was not always obvious to some; this was especially true of the spelling feature that offered alternatives for misspelled words. Also, I had to explain or refrain from using English idioms.
- Outside concerns: These students faced considerable outside personal problems. For example, there were many single mothers with several children, serious conflicts with neighbors, transportation problems, etc. These problems came to my attention because I emphasized that absences would be detrimental to classroom performance; the excuses for absenteeism reflected these problems.

Teaching this course was interesting, challenging, and rewarding; the students appreciated the additional help and special opportunity that this class offered. The experiment appeared to work.

Jose Sainz, *Assistant Professor, Computer Science*

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Two-Minute Scramble

For a long time I have been a proponent of collaborative learning; almost all of my classes use some form of group learning in daily assignments or in testing. For example, in literature classes I use group testing; in Interpersonal Communications I use dyadic or triadic testing, and in Composition II the students set their own semester learning (course) agenda. Despite this position, until recently I still held on to some old philosophies—e.g., that information is a "secret" kept behind closed doors for which the teachers hold the only key. Students must suffer before they can have access to information and generally are never given the key. Access is only through the teacher. Consequently, students never learn how to use the key (to find information on their own).

I had read "Who in Their Right Mind..." [*Innovation Abstracts*, Volume XV, Number 16] about giving essay questions to students prior to exams so that they could compose well-developed answers. I liked the idea and subsequently tried it with pleasing results. The two-minute scramble is my latest attempt to encourage collaborative learning.

The two-minute scramble is not entirely my idea; it was suggested (with modifications) by students during a group literature examination. As a whole, students were doing fairly well on the exam, but as I walked around the room, I discovered areas where student recall was poor. One student whimsically asked if she could look in her notes or book for just a minute. She said she knew the answer and could almost see it on the page. All eyes turned pleadingly to me; I thought, "Why not?" Toward the end of that exam, I allowed one student in each group to look at the text or notes (it did not matter whose notes) for two minutes. What a scramble!

What did they learn? They learned to access information efficiently, enhance teamwork skills, increase communication skills, practice time management, and evaluate and synthesize information quickly. Most student groups chose to leave questions they could not answer for the two-minute scramble. There seemed to be increased self-esteem ("I knew that answer was there") and decreased frustration.

What did I learn? How to access information can no longer be kept a secret; teachers can no longer be the sole key holders. Students must learn they can be in control; they can be the "key" to their own learning.

Sue Darby, *Chair/Instructor, Humanities (Cowley County Community College, KS); Graduate Student, Community College Leadership Program*

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Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

November 4, 1994, Vol. XVI, No. 26

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INNOVATION ABSTRACTS is a publication of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD), Department of Educational Administration, College of Education, EDB 348, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, (512) 471-7545. Funding in part by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Sid W. Richardson Foundation. Issued weekly when classes are in session during fall and spring terms. ISSN 0199-106X.

VOLUME XVI, NUMBER 27

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (NISOD), COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN • WITH SUPPORT FROM THE W. K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION AND THE SID W. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION

Adopt-A-Scholar Program for Hispanic Students

About 25 percent of the population in Torrington, Wyoming, area is Hispanic, but most in that group do not reach their full potential or even get a chance because so many youngsters dropout of the public schools or do not go to college. Parents and family members sometimes find it difficult to motivate or encourage the children to accomplish all they can in the education system. Getting parents involved is one of the key factors in Eastern Wyoming College's Adopt-A-Scholar program.

Hispanic youngsters in this program are encouraged to remain in school, to strive for scholastic achievement, as well as to refrain from drugs. The Adopt-A-Scholar program introduces these young people to real role models who present the idea that it is possible to do more with their lives. It is a compilation of other similar programs across the country, as well as four years of listening to common problems and learning about options for our situation.

The scholars are selected in the sixth grade and receive a variety of benefits from EWC starting at the time of selection and continuing through their second year of college. Scholars are selected from among minority students within the county elementary schools whose parents or guardians lack college experience or whose financial support is limited. The scholars must show need for the support and potential for success.

Scholars receive free tuition for many of the programs EWC offers in both community education and credit classes, starting at the sixth-grade level and continuing through four semesters at EWC. Other benefits to the scholars include: recognition of academic progress; EWC hats and T-shirts; participation in EWC athletic and cultural events; development of relationships with EWC student role models (mentors); and participation in a three-day summer youth conference.

The summer program includes opportunities to meet regional and national role models of minority descent, self-esteem enhancement, alcohol and drug abuse prevention, career exploration, on-campus living, and study skills training.

Sixth graders are selected because we felt that not enough attention has been focused on younger students. By the time colleges contact seniors in high school, they have already made up their minds, or they are past the point when they could begin to prepare for college or a career.

To begin the program, all eligible sixth graders and 10 eligible students from seventh through 12th grade are selected. Each year thereafter, all eligible sixth graders will be included, and all of the previous seventh through 12th grade students will continue to receive program benefits.

To remain eligible, scholars must remain drug-free and maintain a certain grade-point level that gradually increases with their educational progress. Grades six and seven must maintain a 2.00 G.P.A.; grades eight through 10, a 2.50 G.P.A.; and grades 11 through the first two years in college, a 3.0 G.P.A. The scholar must provide a copy of grades and/or transcripts each year to the college to prove continued eligibility. If the scholar's annual G.P.A. falls below the prescribed minimum, he/she must write an appeal letter. EWC has the final decision in determining continued student eligibility.

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Benefits To the College

- Builds relationships with the public schools at all levels.
- Builds relationships with students, their families, neighbors, and friends.
- Develops positive public relations within the community.
- Exposes various groups to EWC's resources.
- Creates ambassadors who are walking advertisements throughout the public schools for a full seven years.
- Involves institutions outside of the college.
- Encourages minority enrollment.

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Benefits To the Scholars and Their Families

- Scholars are selected during their sixth-grade year. The program is explained to students and their parents.
- During the sixth through 10th grades, the scholar is

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given free tuition to enroll each year in two community education classes, including any sports clinic. Appropriate EWC attire is provided.
- Each student is issued a student activity card for athletic and cultural events.
- During the 11th and 12th grades, the scholar is provided free tuition to enroll in college credit courses.
- Upon successful completion of high school and the program, EWC pays for the first four semesters of tuition at the college.
- Opportunities are available for the parent(s) and/or guardian(s) to participate in college activities and/or personal development activities.

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Not-So-Obvious Benefits To the Students

- Students who are least at risk in ability but most at risk in other criteria categories (finances, family education background) are offered the chance to succeed.
- Students have had continuing support and experience on the campus (for seven years) during which they could consider and experience college.

Noelle Kierstyn, *Director, Public Relations*

Billy Bates, *Dean, Student Services*

Tim Alvarez, *Assistant Director, Admissions*

For further information, contact Billy Bates at Eastern Wyoming College, 3200 West C Street, Torrington, WY 82240, or Tim Alvarez at University of Nebraska, 901 North 17th Street, Lincoln, NE 68588.

[Note: Authors acknowledge the important work at Johnson County Community College (KS) that provided EWC with the concept of the Adopt-a-Scholar Program.]

Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

November 11, 1994, Vol. XVI, No. 27

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INNOVATION ABSTRACTS is a publication of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD), Department of Educational Administration, College of Education, EDB 348, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, (512) 471-7545. Funding in part by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Sid W. Richardson Foundation. Issued weekly when classes are in session during fall and spring terms. ISSN 0199-106X.

VOLUME XVI, NUMBER 28

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (NISOD), COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN • WITH SUPPORT FROM THE W. K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION AND THE SID W. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION

Portfolio Creation

Two years ago I was asked to institute a new program in computer drafting and design (CADD) at a community college. I am a licensed architect and have used CADD in my own work and taught it to a wide variety of students. I know and understand the creative power the computer brings to design professions.

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My students learn how to draw with a computer by creating one drawing per week for most of the 10-week quarter, followed by a drawing project. I choose the drawing assignments carefully; they represent a laddered approach to learning the current software program. Each week's assigned drawing builds upon skills learned in previous weeks. So by demonstrating these drawing skills, students learn how to use AutoCAD, or whatever program I am teaching.

The weekly required drawing creates a fast-paced learning environment. It represents a big challenge, intended to build up to the academic pièce de résistance: the student's portfolio of work—a new vehicle for academic evaluation, far more valuable than a letter grade.

This portfolio, or book of drawings, is critical. I require that all course assignments and the project go into this graphic notebook; they should have professional appearance and style. The book of drawings does not have to be large (standard "A" folio size of 8 1/2 x 11 sheets from a Hewlett Packard Laserjet printer is fine), but it has to have a graphic presence. I recommend a title page with an individual logo or theme, possibly a table of contents. All work goes into plastic sheet protectors, and each student is required to purchase an appropriate hard-cover notebook to maintain the required style and appearance.

In the basic AutoCAD course, a three-quarter sequence covering the fundamentals of orthographic (two-dimensional) drawing, followed by courses in paraline theory and true perspective modeling (three-dimensional work), the student has the opportunity to create an impressive display of talents and abilities.

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All of the drawing assignments, the project, and the portfolio receive letter grades. At this juncture, the skeptic might wonder what all the fuss is about. If I am giving out conventional letter grades, why make such a big deal out of the portfolio?—because the graphic notebook is much more important to student success than any transcript grade.

In the design professions, future employers want to see what a potential employee can do. Can the student draw? Can the student produce on the computer? Can the student make a real contribution to the firm? The same questions hold true for my students going on to advanced degrees in the academic world.

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Portfolio creation is highly applicable to the field of architecture; in fact, the creation of a portfolio of work can benefit most courses of study. In the sciences, laboratory and experimental work lend themselves to portfolio creation. The same applies to expository writing, or fiction, or poetry within the language arts. Research papers in any of the social sciences can be formally tied into a notebook of achievement.

A portfolio is simply a vehicle for demonstrating skills. As such, it is a "put-up-or-shut-up" chance that every student should take. There is nothing new or revolutionary about this procedure.

It gives students the opportunity to show what they can do. It shows them how to present and display their work. The grades they earn along the way mean little compared to that tangible end.

Michael Allan Moore, *Architect*

For further information, contact the author at Yakima Valley Community College, Engineering Department, P. O. Box 1647, Yakima, WA 98907.

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The Virtue of Group Papers

One of the challenges for instructors of American government courses is that some students feel estranged from their government and its politics. Confronting a class of jaded Americans can be painfully disheartening. I have a method for stimulating what the Greeks termed "political virtue," or the political efficacy necessary to operate in the civic arena with some sense of principled confidence.

The Greeks believed that civic activity engenders civic virtue, that citizens gained the virtue necessary to govern and to evaluate the workings of government, by way of political involvement. People excluded from civic activity could never hope to understand the virtuous course of action in any political situation.

If instructors of political science concur with these insights, and if they see civic virtue as more important to their students than memorizing terminology and academic concepts, they may find themselves involving their students less in listening to lectures and more in classroom activities. The group essay is an exacting exercise rewarded with a hard-earned grade and perhaps with some measure of political virtue.

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In American government classes, students work in groups (of four or five) to write four essays.

- An assignment begins with the class role playing a political issue. In their first simulation, they imagine themselves the citizens of a fragile new country in need of a more centralized political system, and they construct a constitution for their country. In their second activity, they debate liberal, centrist, and conservative values. In their third activity, they work with the dilemmas faced by the Jewish majority in Skokie (IL), when the tiny American Nazi Party insisted on demonstrating. In their last simulation, the students confront America's national debt, posturing as interest group bureaucrats demanding public resources and as congressional representatives attempting to balance those interests within budgetary constraints.
- After each simulation, the students receive a worksheet with questions to answer outside of class: what did they learn; what was the most important lesson; why did they do what they did; how did they feel; would they do anything differently if they had a second chance; how does the textbook tie in; how did they formulate their answers? The completed worksheets are brought to class, and the students are assigned to a writing group. Each group must work together to merge its individual ideas into a single formal essay addressing the questions on the worksheets.
- Typed papers are submitted; each student attaches an individual handwritten worksheet, informing the instructor of his/her initial contributions. On the cover sheet, the students also grade individual group members on participation. Each student grade is averaged and the instructor's grade is averaged in with the total grade given to each by the group. Student input on the grade keeps everyone focused and working during the writing process.

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Most students are enthusiastic about their group assignments—they attend regularly and work hard on their papers. Most importantly, they leave the class with political lessons not soon forgotten. Of course, I still lecture, and the students still take tests over their textbook material. But, it seems obvious that the most meaningful instruction in this class, for example, concerns less the memorizing of the process by which bills pass the U.S. House of Representatives than what it means to defend one's political values before one's peers. There is much to be gained from stimulating political virtue in alienated, skeptical, "apolitical" Americans.

Mark Greer, *Instructor, American Government*

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Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

November 18, 1994, Vol. XVI, No. 28
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INNOVATION ABSTRACTS is a publication of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD), Department of Educational Administration, College of Education, EDB 348, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, (512) 471-7545. Funding in part by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Sid W. Richardson Foundation. Issued weekly when classes are in session during fall and spring terms. ISSN 0199-106X.

VOLUME XVI, NUMBER 29

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Issues for Debate: Increasing Student Participation

For many years I have been observing the level of student interaction and participation in my business courses. Some students are shy, afraid to say something wrong or be exposed to the criticism, unprepared to discuss the topic, or simply not assertive. Many of my students are commuters who travel an hour or more to come to campus or are taking a class in the evening after eight hours of work. They have other roles to play as spouses or family members, parents, heads of households, employees, civic leaders, church members, or citizens, so class participation is not their first priority.

After trying different strategies to increase the level of student participation in class, sometimes with great success and sometimes with lukewarm responses, I decided to develop a series of *issues for debate*:

- "Is it O.K. to use your company's computer to print some posters for the garage sale that you are going to have at your home next Saturday?"
- "Is it ethical to make personal calls to your friends from the office on company time?"
- "Should a company institute mandatory drug testing for all employees without regard for the employee's privacy rights?"
- "Does a company have a say in the activities of an employee during off-work hours?
- "Does an employer have the right to put TV cameras in offices, employee lounges or bathrooms to monitor employee activities or to reduce employees' thievery?"
- "Does a retail store have the right to install TV cameras and special mirrors in dressing rooms in order to control shoplifting?"
- "Is it O.K. for an American sales manager working abroad to offer a bribe to a foreign purchasing agent in order to obtain an order, when working in a country where bribes are customarily given?"
- "Should underdeveloped countries not be allowed to learn high technology, so we can have them as buyers of our high-tech products, and not as our future competitors?"
- "Is it ethical to spend millions of dollars to advertise cigarettes and tobacco products in third world countries?"
- "Is it O.K. to use the office copier to make a copy of your personal tax return?"
- "A domestic company has in storage a large quantity of products that it cannot sell here because the product does not meet the safety standards required by our government, should this company sell this product in foreign markets where there is no strict regulation, even if the product could be unsafe to buyers and consumers?"
- "Should an employer have the right to intervene in 'office romances'?"

The students receive the *issue for debate* one week before the scheduled discussion and are asked to prepare by tapping any information source they wish. Some students go to the library and launch a formal research effort using periodicals, journals, and encyclopedias. Others use more unorthodox methods, such as asking other faculty members or knowledgeable individuals in the community. A student may take a position supporting an issue, or not, but must explain the reason for taking the position.

On the day of the discussion, the class members are divided into two groups. The students who have a common position are given time to exchange ideas and to explain to other students in the group their main arguments and strategies to be used in the forthcoming discussion. In most cases, there is a lively discussion of the issues, with balanced student participation. Most students are able to apply concepts and principles of the class lectures into the discussion of the issues. They are able to form opinions, take positions and defend them, understand other students' and the instructor's opinions and points of view, and develop an appreciation for current business events and legal issues.

Felipe H. Chia, *Associate Professor, Management and Marketing, and Coordinator of the Business Management Program*

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Criminal Law—The "Grimm" Truth

Many students of criminal justice perceive the subject of criminal law to be boring, difficult, or intimidating, and the classes to be long-winded lectures about elements of crime, culpability, intent, and proof. Aside from the students' personal experiences, little practical application is traditionally incorporated in these courses.

To increase student interest and provide practical application of criminal law to life, I decided to require each student to read one fairy tale from a select group of tales and to apply the Texas Penal Code to the acts described in the story line. Several children's stories that included crimes in the plot were identified: *Little Red Riding Hood, Goldilocks and the Three Bears, Hansel and Gretel, Jack and the Beanstalk, Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs,* and *The Three Little Pigs.*

The basic premise of the assignment was that the story represented a police report, prepared by an officer and submitted to the student, acting as a supervisor. The goal was to have the student/supervisor recommend all charges to the prosecutor.

The student was to list, in chronological order, all criminal acts that occurred and cite them according to Texas law. Then, all facts of proof from the story were to be identified for each crime; this required recording the elements of each crime. All actors were to be identified and matched with their criminal acts. After the major crimes were identified, the degree of offense (felony/misdemeanor) and level were to be identified according to Texas law, and all lesser offenses listed. Finally, all identifiable defenses and justifications were to be listed and cited according to Texas law. Then, recommendations were made on what charges should be brought against whom.

Students were allowed to work individually or in groups, but each was required to submit an individual report for grading. They were encouraged to meet with me at least once before the assignment was due to discuss progress. I used this time to guide those students who either were making this assignment too hard (several did) or were heading in the wrong direction. No instructions were given on the length of the report, the detail required, or the depth to which the student must delve into the law. Students were merely told to answer all questions in the instructions.

The assignment was made during the 12th week of the semester, after the majority of the course work had been completed. This allowed me adequate time to introduce the class to the principles and concepts of criminal law and the Texas Penal Code.

Students were interviewed at the end of the assignment. Many were amazed at how violent children's books can be when viewed from an uncommon perspective. Others said they found the law less intimidating when there was an objective to achieve. Several expressed concern over accuracy and comprehensiveness of stories/reports, while others said they learned more about the law in two or three weeks than they had in the previous 12. Not one of the students indicated that this assignment was useless or unnecessary.

Students were allowed to use the Texas Penal Code during the comprehensive final exam. Fewer students looked at the Code during the exam than in previous semesters, and those that did spent less time hunting and searching for answers. They were more confident in their ability to use the Code, and final grades were considerably higher than in previous semesters.

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Suanne D. Roueche, Editor

December 2, 1994, Vol. XVI, No. 29

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INNOVATION ABSTRACTS is a publication of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD), Department of Educational Administration, College of Education, EDB 348, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712. (512) 471-7545. Funding in part by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Sid W. Richardson Foundation. Issued weekly when classes are in session during fall and spring terms. ISSN 0199-106X.

VOLUME XVI, NUMBER 30

INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STAFF AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (NISOD), COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN • WITH SUPPORT FROM THE W. K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION AND THE SID W. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION

Teaching Empathy and Understanding With a Game

It is difficult to teach students concepts in the affective domain. It is even more difficult to get students to examine their feelings and biases effectively. I struggle with this task each year in teaching beginning nursing students.

These students have particular difficulty identifying with the elderly. The component of the course that deals with older patients is often met with reluctance, anxiety, and negative attitudes. Entering the clinical setting with these feelings typically results in a poor experience for the students and for the patients. It is obvious that for students to learn about and care effectively for older patients, they must think critically about their own attitudes and increase their understanding and empathy for the problems of the elderly. This year, we used a game to create an environment for helping them accomplish these objectives.

The Game

The students "lived" the experiences of the elderly in this game. They started at the "identity table" where they were asked to select an age (older than 65), an occupation from which they have retired, a retirement lifestyle, and three personal possessions that they would like to take with them to a nursing home. To aid in the process of identifying with the elderly, students were given simulated deficits associated with aging: cotton placed in their ears simulated some degree of deafness; glasses with vaseline on the lens simulated cataracts; gloves with tongue depressors in one or two fingers simulated the stiffened joints of arthritis; shoelaces tied together produced the limited gait of arthritic hips; and pebbles placed in shoes provided the pain of walking with corns, bunions, or arthritic deformities.

The game identified three functional levels of elder living: independent, assisted, and totally dependent; each level was located at a separate table. Each had a table operator who wore an identification badge, Game Overall Director (GOD). Operators were coached to display biases and discriminatory practices typical of those seen in society. At Table 1, a newly retired player might be discouraged from learning to drive a car by being told he is too old to learn that now. A player at Table 2 might have cash (three pennies) confiscated for safekeeping and told he is not capable of handling his own finances. At Table 3, a player might be tied into a chair and labeled senile. An income grid allowed players an opportunity to supplement their fixed income. The operator of this area was equally demeaning to the players, attempting to cheat them or involve them in questionable money-making schemes.

At each table, players drew cards and proceeded through the game as the cards indicated. Some cards had positive consequences; however, the greatest number had negative consequences which caused the players to move from their independent healthy state to an eventual assisted, or total dependent state, with the loss of personal effects and income. Even their identities were threatened with nicknames such as "Pops," "Honey," and "Sweetie." As totally dependent, they were left on bedpans for prolonged periods of time, fed baby food, and their requests and complaints were ignored, until finally the consequence of death, instead of invoking dread, actually became a relief that the struggle was over.

The game was played for approximately one hour, then discussion allowed students to verbalize their feelings and observations. Students also were asked to critique the game for its value as a learning experience.

Evaluation

By altering students' perspectives of the elderly, we had hoped that their attitudes would change and that the care they delivered to their aged clients would improve. After the game, students in the clinical setting did show greater patience, concern, and empathy for their elderly clients. The nursing home rotation was seen as an opportunity to interact with the elderly, instead of a dreaded requirement, and a few students expressed a desire to return to the nursing home for further clinical experiences.

The utilization of this game as a teaching/learning tool allowed students the opportunity to experience the life of the elderly in a safe, reality-oriented environment. Students were able to explore their feelings and examine biases from a perspective designed to promote insights and understanding. The instructors worked to create an emotional and intellectual climate that was constructive and caring in order for students to freely participate and to be able to draw their own inferences and conclusions from the experience without fear of censure.

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College of Education, The University of Texas at Austin, EDB 348, Austin, Texas 78712

Conclusion

Responses from students about this game and their experiences were positive. They were intensely involved in the experience, fighting to keep the identity and independence of their character. They had some fun while gaining insights and understanding of older people and their problems. Student suggestions and responses have led us to work on offering this experience as a continuing education workshop to health care providers and other interested students. We also are considering other gaming strategies. This creative, multifaceted teaching/learning situation promoted the development of critical thinking and creative problem-solving skills necessary for students to meet the challenges of caring for the elderly.

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The Craft of Imaginative Writing: A Short Course on Discipline

Though all undergraduate institutions offer a range of English composition courses and many offer courses in creative writing, few programs allow interested, motivated students who are also good writers to hear firsthand how the professional writer of journalism, fiction, creative nonfiction, and poetry progresses in the day-to-day engagement with the written word. Sensing an interest in such a course from a sufficiently advanced group of students, I offered "The Craft of Imaginative Writing" during a six-week semester.

Over the short summer semester, I invited 15 published writers from a wide range of genres to read to the class from their work and discuss it in terms of influence, craft, intention, and goals. The students, who had read something from the work of each writer, then questioned the visiting author closely, drawing, for the most part, from a pool of relevant questions we had written in our initial class meetings.

- Who (and what) have been your major influences?
- What is your typical writing routine? Do you write daily?
- Do you keep a journal? Why/why not?
- What techniques do you use to find "inspiration"?
- Do you use (have you used) any writing "exercises"?
- How much revision do you typically do?
- What is the formal content/intention of your work?
- What advice would you give a young writer?

On days when no writer visited, we compared reactions, discussed similarities and differences in approach, and discussed the work of upcoming writers.

Students were to respond to each visiting writer with an extended journal entry and to write a final 10-page paper discussing the work of any writer or writers who had visited the class. The midterm and final essay exams asked students to discuss insights they had gained about the process and practice of serious writing. I was pleased with the results of the course both in terms of what transpired in the classroom and in terms of the insights my students reached in their written work.

The course was a pleasure to teach; in fact, I often felt as though, having wound up and started a machine, I had only to stand back and watch it purr. There were surprisingly few lulls in the question-and-answer period; in many cases, the discussion lasted an hour or more beyond the allotted class time. My students learned a great deal, too—about dedication and hard work, about the importance of reading, and about how one becomes a writer—simply by writing, and then by writing (and revising) more. The information was both practical and literary: Students learned specific writing practices, and they engaged in discussions of aesthetics and values. Student feedback indicated that the course was not only interesting but that it was, for some, inspiring.

For the instructor, the success of such a course as "The Craft of Imaginative Writing" requires hard work in the months prior to the semester during which the course will be taught. It is imperative that the visiting authors not only be interesting, accomplished writers, but that they also be personable speakers who are honestly willing to share. (With the permission of the visiting writers, I make an audiotape of each speaker for use in future classes.) The students must be screened, as well, to ensure they are genuinely interested and are sufficiently advanced in their own writing that they will be able to engage in fruitful discussion with the visiting authors. And a course like this is best taught during a short semester—the experience might lose its intensity and become tedious over a longer term.

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December 9, 1994, Vol. XVI, No. 30

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INNOVATION ABSTRACTS is a publication of the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD), Department of Educational Administration, College of Education, EDB 348, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712, (512) 471-7545. Funding in part by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Sid W. Richardson Foundation. Issued weekly when classes are in session during fall and spring terms. ISSN 0199-106X.